

# QUADERNI d'italianistica

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# QUADERNI d'italianistica

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## La “bella scola” ed il “salutevol cenno”: una ricerca semantica e stilistica

Quando Dante è accolto nella “bella scola”<sup>1</sup> del Limbo (*Inf.* 4.80-102) la sua formale ‘accettazione’ nel mezzo dei massimi poeti del canone da lui stesso creato avviene per mezzo di un generale “salutevol cenno” seguito poi da un compiaciuto sorriso virgiliano. I quattro grandi poeti del canone “ragionano” di Dante piuttosto a lungo prima di ammetterlo fra di loro e tutta l’atmosfera dell’episodio è fortemente connotata nel senso di una ‘investitura’ cavalleresco-accademica.

Verso una dimensione ‘cortese’ dell’incontro ci spinge soprattutto la descrizione di Omero, che è “poeta sovrano” e che, brandendo una spada, incede “come sire”. Il massimo poeta della tradizione occidentale è poi paragonato all’aquila, animale ‘imperiale’ per eccellenza (due sole occorrenze nel poema: qui e nell’episodio di Giustiniano di *Par.* 6.1) e Dante è reso membro di una “schiera”, vocabolo che curiosamente compare nella sua piena valenza guerresca (valenza che nel poema è assunta dal vocabolo solo nel caso seguente su 19 occorrenze) nell’episodio di Forese Donati (*Purg.* 24.99) in cui Virgilio e Stazio, poeti anch’essi, son per giunta definiti “marescalchi” (unica occorrenza nel poema).

Altro indizio ‘cortese’ è il verbo-tecnico “ragionare” (“Amor che nella mente mi ragiona”) che – pertinente ad un piano epidittico o dimostrativo, come ben si vede dallo studio dell’uso che ne fa Dante nel caso del ‘conciliabolo’ che stiamo esaminando – viene a mio giudizio ricondotto alla sua specializzazione curtense o *lato sensu* stilnovistica di ‘amabile dialogo di nobili intelletti’ come in *Purg.* 2.112 ; *Purg.* 22.21, 104 e 130 (nel canto di Stazio); *Purg.* 24.2 (proprio nel canto di Forese) e nell’importantissimo commiato di Virgilio in *Purg.* 27.53.

Il vocabolo “senno”<sup>2</sup> ricorre 11 volte nel poema in chiusura di verso (ma globalmente 15) ed in 9 di queste occasioni fa rima con “cenno”. Non credo che si tratti soltanto di una costrizione del rimario dantesco, che effettivamente come forme concorrenziali offre solo il toponimo “Lenno” o le tre forme verbali “enno”, “dienno” e “fенno”, ma penso che si possa parlare piuttosto di un particolare rilievo dato al rapporto allievo-maestro, nell’estrinsecarsi del quale ad una positiva valutazione dell’ingegno non può non far seguito un “cenno” di

approvazione se non proprio una lode.<sup>3</sup> E questo da un punto di vista 'accademico' è pacifico; ma il principio vale, e forse ancora di più, da un punto di vista psicagogico o comunque esemplare, se viene applicato a persone che condividono un particolare *status*, una condizione privilegiata di appartenenza ad una *élite* culturale o, meglio, spirituale, capace di incarnare ideali tali da poter giustificare la 'solennità' ed allo stesso tempo la 'complicità' di questo tipo di 'saluto-segnale', di questo 'riconoscimento' tra pari o comunque fra persone che, se non esattamente pari per dignità, appartengono ad un mondo 'superiore' di cui l' 'annuizione' è segno tangibile (visto che d'altra parte *adnuere*, cioè 'fare un cenno di approvazione', era il verbo tecnico usato dai latini per indicare il 'favore' della divinità nei confronti di un difficile progetto o di un'ardua impresa, e specialmente nell'epica). Per quanto riguarda "cenno" il *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, pur parlando di *origo incerta*, conferma per il lemma *cinnus* una parentela con l'atto dell'annuizione, se nelle *Glosse néuma* è equiparato a *nutus* e se in Fulgenzio (*Serm. ant.* 46) si attesta: *nictare dicimus cinnum facere*. Il *Dizionario Etimologico Italiano*, dopo aver menzionato le stesse fonti del *Thesaurus*, si spinge più in là citando quelle che vengono definite le "contaminazioni" del vocabolo *cinnum* con *signum* che sarebbero avvenute nei dialetti italiani del nord (genovese, piemontese, emiliano) ed addirittura avanzando l'ipotesi etimologica di una connessione fra il latino *cinnum* ed il greco *kinéo* (= 'muovo', che instaura, dal punto di vista della analisi che ci accingiamo a presentare, una suggestiva relazione causa-effetto fra 'cenno' e 'movimento', o 'avanzamento'). Molto laconica è invece la voce "cenno" del *Dizionario Etimologico della Lingua Italiana* di Cortellazzo-Zolli, laddove assai doviziosa di riscontri è la stessa voce nel *Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana* curato dal Battaglia; riscontri che però non aggiungono molto all'idea generale di "ordine", "comando" o "segno", "segnalazione". Per quello che riguarda invece il vocabolo "senno", oltre alla solita laconicità del *DELI*, registriamo una se non esauriente quanto meno sufficiente trattazione nel *DEI* che avanza l'etimologia dal francone *sin* o *sinn* che varrebbe "senno", "tendenza", significato che permane nel tedesco *sinn* che significa appunto, secondo il Wahrig, 'senso', 'organo di senso', 'sensibilità', 'comprensione', 'scopo' e 'significato'. La lettura del *GDLI* è invece per noi assai importante perché fra i numerosissimi riscontri del termine che vengono proposti, e che ovviamente comprendono i significati più prevedibili di "prudenza", "buon senso", "facoltà intellettuale", "disposizione spirituale" e "astuzia", c'è anche una attestazione del vocabolo usato nel senso di "criterio" o "principio informatore" (Ariosto, *Furioso* 4.65). Come è chiaro una citazione da Ariosto sarebbe irrilevante ai fini dello studio che ci proponiamo se non avesse appigli anche nel *corpus* dantesco. E assai stranamente i compilatori della voce hanno relegato una interessantissima occorrenza del termine nel *Convivio* (4.27.9), perfettamente sovrapponibile a quella dell'Ariosto, nella categoria "buon senso". Crediamo infatti che nel luogo dantesco "senno" valga 'conoscenza e possesso di



un codice morale'; acquisizione che in certo modo ci agevolerà nell'affrontare il nostro viaggio attraverso la strategia intratestuale di Dante che abbiamo posto a oggetto della nostra ricerca. Utili ma non dirimenti e soprattutto non apportatrici di considerazioni nuove sono poi le voci *cenno* e *senno* dell'*Enciclopedia Dantesca*, compilate rispettivamente da Emilio Pasquini e Alessandro Niccoli. Vediamo di ripercorrere, a questo punto, lo sviluppo all'interno del poema e, per così dire, la 'casistica' di questi complici riconoscimenti o 'investiture'.

Dobbiamo partire evidentemente con il canto 4 dell'*Inferno* che non riesamineremo nel suo complesso ma di cui mi piace far notare qualche aspetto rimasto fin qui in ombra. Dato che ogni vera 'annuizione' deve avere una funzione diciamo così propiziatrice (si noti l'ambiguo valore semantico di "cenno salutevol" a mezza via fra 'cenno di saluto' e 'cenno di buon auspicio' o 'cenno che conforta e rinfranca' visto il significato del latino *salus*), l'ingresso di Dante in una "compagnia" proprio al principio di un viaggio, per quanto breve sia il tratto di cammino che il pellegrino compie con i cinque personaggi, può avere secondo me la funzione di un potente 'viatico' (del resto anche il valore semantico di "compagnia" come 'gruppo di persone con cui condividere delle difficoltà', delle prove o dei disagi è ben attestato nella *Commedia*).

Nella seconda delle occorrenze (*Inf.* 8.3-9) del gruppo "cenno-senno", e cioè nella descrizione della sosta di Dante e Virgilio di fronte alle mura della città di Dite, l'enfasi si pone in senso passivo proprio sulla oscurità di un "cenno" (cioè di un segnale convenuto, un segno di riconoscimento) di cui Dante non conosce il 'codice', cosicché lo smarrito pellegrino interroga Virgilio, dopo averlo qualificato "mar di tutto il senno", proprio sulla natura delle segnalazioni luminose che si scambiano dalle torri della città.

[...]li occhi nostri n'andar suso a la cima  
per due fiammette che i vedemmo porre,  
e un'altra da lungi render *cenno*,  
tanto ch'a pena il potea l'occhio tòrre.  
E io mi volsi al mar di tutto 'l *senno*;  
dissi: "Questo che dice? e che risponde  
quell'altro foco? e chi son quei che 'l fenno?"

Questo senso di disvelamento di un arcano pervade poi profondamente il terzo episodio, quello dell'ascesa di Gerione sollecitata da Virgilio per mezzo della corda che Dante usava come cintola (*Inf.* 16.115-20). Virgilio riceve da Dante la corda e la getta nel burrone; a questo punto il poeta si chiede quale novità debba seguire a questo nuovo "cenno" (cioè inequivocabilmente un "segnale" come tutti i più autorevoli commentatori concordano nell'affermare) fatto dal suo maestro a chissà quale entità. Virgilio che è il "mare" di ogni possibile ingegno non soltanto è pienamente consapevole del suo proprio gesto,

ma addirittura 'legge' il pensiero di Dante sciogliendo i suoi dubbi e fornendogli in anticipo una risposta. Il poeta commenta questa dimostrazione d'acume da parte di Virgilio ammonendo le persone comuni a non tentare di dissimulare le cause delle proprie azioni di fronte ad uomini di ingegno tale che possano 'leggere il pensiero' ("ma per entro i pensier miran col senno"):

"E' pur convien che novità risponda",  
dicea fra me medesmo, "al novo cenno  
che 'l maestro con l'occhio sì seconda".  
Ahi quanto cauti li uomini esser dienno  
presso a color che non veggion pur l'ovra,  
ma per entro i pensier miran col senno!

Il primo dei due canti dedicati alla Bolgia dei Barattieri si conclude, come è noto, (*Inf.* 21.131-39) con l'inganno di Malacoda che affida Dante e Virgilio ad una scorta di diavoli perché siano condotti alla sesta Bolgia. Anche in questo caso l'uso del vocabolo "cenno" è da ricondurre esattamente al campo semantico di 'segnale', 'segno convenzionale' e nell'economia dell'espressionismo stilistico tipico del canto esso si riferisce al fatto che, nel congedarsi e nel voltare verso l'argine sinistro della scarpata, ogni diavolo stringe la lingua fra i denti rivolgendosi al capo della schiera ("verso lor duca") proprio come a indicare il tipo di segnale che si aspettano ("per cenno"), ed il capo dà appunto il volgare *incipit* della sua famosa flatulenza ("ed elli avea del cul fatto trombetta") affinché essi possano rispondere con le loro pernaccie. Virgilio, a cui Dante aveva manifestato timore per il fatto che i diavoli "minaccian duoli" col digrignare i denti, aveva già ammonito il suo discepolo in merito ai 'costumi' diabolici esortandolo a non occuparsi del loro senso e del loro 'codice': "lasciali digrignar pur a lor senno". Dante riusa lo schema del quarto e ottavo canto dell'*Inferno* per assegnare, in una sfumatura parodistica, un codice, un segnale convenzionale ed un maestro anche ad una *schiera* di diavoli, con la quale ancora una volta i due pellegrini percorrono un tratto del loro cammino (notevole l'occorrenza di un 'catalogo' quale quello dei versi 118-123 e notevole il giudizio del Camporesi [citato nel commento al verso di Umberto Bosco e Giovanni Reggio]: "la trombetta di Barbariccia si oppone in netta specularità negativa alle *trombe* dei cavalieri" [per simili implicazioni "parodistiche" degli strumenti musicali vedi anche l'episodio di Mastro Adamo per la contrapposizione tamburo-liuto<sup>4</sup>]). Ed alla sensibilità di Charles Singleton non è sfuggito il fatto che anche in un simile contesto diabolico, e cioè da un punto di vista speculare ed opposto a quello del mondo del bene, c'è spazio, e forse con maggiore effetto comico, per una dimensione di 'complicità': "The grotesque gesture (one has only to imagine what snouts these demons have) amounts to a 'wink' of complicity and delight at the prospect of the adventure ahead, in which the devils are going to trick Virgil and Dante":

"[...] non vedi tu ch'e' digrignan li denti  
e con le ciglia ne minaccian duoli?".  
Ed elli a me: "Non vo' che tu paventi;  
lasciali digrignar pur a lor *senno*,  
ch'e' fanno ciò per li lessi dolenti".  
Per l'argine sinistro volta dienno;  
ma prima avea ciascun la lingua stretta  
coi denti, verso lor duca, per *cenno*;  
ed elli avea del cul fatto trombetta.

La prima occorrenza della diade nella cantica del *Purgatorio* è nella apostrofe di Dante a Firenze che si trova nel sesto canto (127-51) e segue l'invettiva contro l'Italia. È davvero interessante notare come Dante usi "cenno" quasi ad indicare il progresso civile e giuridico che Atene e Sparta realizzarono. Dante personifica le due città, visto che peraltro l'apostrofe a Firenze agevola e prepara questo trattamento del tema, ed immagina che esse annuiscano al "viver bene" che, data la tensione civile e politica che pervade il contesto, mi pare evidente sia la rappresentazione della giustizia, categoria quasi sovrapponibile al 'buon governo' nella *Weltanschauung* dantesca. Ecco che, se si dà anche al "cenno" di Atene e di Sparta un valore concreto di saluto o di manifestazione affettuosa di complicità, la sostanza del rapporto di tipo 'pedagogico' insita nella coppia di vocaboli, e cioè quella che ha a che fare con il livello psicagogico del miglioramento personale e collettivo, viene assolutamente preservata. Le due città si trovano in una "bella scola" capeggiata dalla personificazione del "vivere civile" e cioè dalla Giustizia e scambiano un "cenno" con essa e questo "cenno", che è in realtà inteso in senso grandemente meritorio, è detto "picciolo" solo per l'esigenza dell'ironia dantesca ("Or ti fa lieta, ché tu hai ben onde: / tu ricca, tu con pace e tu con *senno*! / S'io dico 'l ver, l'effetto nol nasconde. / Atene e Lacedemona, che fenno / l'antiche leggi e furon sì civili, / fecero al viver bene un picciol *cenno* / verso di te, che fai tanto sottili / provvedimenti [...]").

Nella seconda occorrenza purgatoriale (*Purg.* 19.85-89) della coppia *cenno-senno* (la sesta della serie che prenderemo in esame) assistiamo ad un diverso trattamento della polarità espressa dai due sostantivi o, se si vuole, ad un loro uso particolare e ristretto. Il "senno" è in questo caso una deliberazione soggettiva di Dante, una sua intenzione o volontà successiva ad un discernimento, come poi sarà nell'episodio del commiato da Virgilio in *Purg.* 27.138-42. Ma, in ogni caso, il 'codice' di questo *senno* risulta essere del tutto chiaro all'interlocutore (che qui e nel citato episodio del commiato è Virgilio, mentre in *Par.* 15.70-73 si avrà Beatrice) il quale poi con un "cenno" consente che esso si trasformi in una azione: "Poi ch'io potei di me fare a mio *senno*". L'episodio in questione è quello del dialogo con Papa Adriano V per rivolgere la parola al quale a Dante basta incrociare lo sguardo di Virgilio ("e volsi li occhi a li occhi

al signor mio”) per ricevere un segnale di permesso (“ond’elli m’assentì con lieto cenno”). Ma il maestro, la guida che è “mare” di tutta la conoscenza, e a questo punto ci sia consentito dirlo, di tutta la sensibilità di cui l’uomo è capace, ove non bastasse la sua straordinaria intelligenza delle cose umane avrebbe comunque – per comprendere ciò che il suo discepolo desidera o ciò che per lui è necessario – l’ausilio del “disio” che Dante lascia spesso trasparire (“ciò che chiede la vista del disio”).

[...] e volsi li occhi a li occhi al signor mio:  
 ond’elli m’assentì con *lieto cenno*  
 ciò che chiede la vista del disio.  
 Poi ch’io potei di me fare a mio *senno*,  
 trassimi sovra quella creatura [...].

Il “disio” torna poi, come molla dell’allocuzione, anche nel canto già citato del *Paradiso* (canto 15) e precisamente nelle parole di Cacciaguida che sa e prevede l’ansia che Dante ha di rivolgergli la parola (“la voce tua sicura, baldia e lieta / suoni la volontà, suoni ‘l *disio*, / a che la mia risposta è già decreta!”). Mi preme sottolineare come nel “decreta” ci sia tutta l’ineluttabilità di quel volere divino che aveva già fatto incontrare Dante ed i poeti della “bella scola” ed aveva chiamato il pellegrino a quel viaggio che al suo principio egli aveva condiviso, anche se per poco, con la “schiera” dei grandi scrittori.

Nella settima occorrenza del sostantivo “cenno” che questa volta, e per ragioni come vedremo comprensibili, è orfano della controparte “senno”, torniamo al significato generico che il vocabolo aveva per Dante e cioè non quello speciale di ‘segno convenzionale’ ma semplicemente quello di ‘cenno di saluto’. Si tratta del primo impatto con il poeta Stazio (*Purg.* 21.7-23), il primo incontro col personaggio che darà compimento alla temperie del Limbo. Il parallelismo e la contiguità del canto 4 dell’*Inferno* con il 21 del *Purgatorio* (incontro con Stazio) e con il 22 della stessa cantica (completamento del catalogo dei poeti) sono a mio giudizio schiaccianti ed ineludibili. I due pellegrini Dante e Virgilio procedono nel loro cammino ed improvvisamente l’“ombra” del poeta Stazio si avvicina a loro da dietro e li saluta, se non esattamente con un *Pax vobis*, con un “o frati miei, Dio vi dea pace” che s’accorda perfettamente col paragone che Dante ha appena fatto fra Cristo e Stazio: “Ed ecco, sì come ne scrive Luca / che Cristo apparve a’ due ch’erano in via, / già surto fuor de la sepulcral buca, / ci apparve un’ombra, e dietro a noi venia”. Anche i quattro grandi poeti del Limbo avevano salutato ed allo stesso tempo onorato Virgilio (“onorate l’altissimo poeta”); ma il loro ‘saluto-encomio’ resta, come tutto il mondo dei virtuosi pagani, al di qua del limite della Grazia, dalla quale Stazio è stato toccato proprio attraverso l’opera poetica di Virgilio. I quattro poeti avevano poi percorso un tratto di cammino con i pellegrini, così come anche Stazio si accinge a fare. Ma al conciliabolo tenuto dai cinque poeti (la



"scola" con in più Virgilio) per decidere dell'ammissione di Dante nel loro 'canone' ed al "cenno" di plauso e di lode per i meriti poetici del poeta e per i prodotti del suo "senno" non può corrispondere nulla di altrettanto compiaciuto o festoso nel contesto purgatorio poiché quando Virgilio risponderà al saluto ("Noi ci volgemo subiti, e Virgilio / rendéli 'l cenno ch'a ciò si conface") lo farà sottolineando l'importanza della meta della salvezza dalla quale egli è purtroppo escluso ("[...] nel beato concilio / ti ponga in pace la verace corte / che me rilega nell'eterno essilio"). Inutile sottolineare quanto amara è per Virgilio la differenza sottilmente adombrata tra "bella scola" e "beato concilio", tra i luoghi dove vive Omero, il "poeta sovrano" armato di spada e che incede "come sire", e la "verace corte" in cui egli non potrà mai entrare. La vasta sapienza di Virgilio non vale un posto in questo concilio e del suo "senno" non resta che una pallida traccia nell'appellativo "dottore" che Dante usa per lui ("E 'l dottor mio: se tu riguardi a' segni [...]").

Una vera e propria riedizione del Limbo, o meglio della sua atmosfera spirituale, anche se in chiave di beatificazione, si trova invece al principio del canto 22 del *Purgatorio* (vv. 10-27); Virgilio, dopo aver cercato di contenere il prorompere dell'affetto di Stazio (fine del canto 21) che, volendo abbracciare i piedi di Virgilio riporterebbe inutilmente le braccia al proprio petto (come Enea con Anchise) se il "Dottore" non gli ricordasse che, essendo entrambi delle ombre, questa dimensione fisica della gioia è loro preclusa, ripercorre con la memoria le tappe del suo rapporto personale con il poeta Stazio. Questo rapporto, cosa importantissima per noi, è poi squisitamente letterario in quanto per Stazio nasce dalla lettura delle opere di Virgilio (e specialmente, come Stazio stesso sostiene, della quarta *Ecloga*: "Ed elli a lui: "Tu prima m'inviasi / verso Parnaso a ber ne le sue grotte, / e prima appresso Dio m'alluminasti" [22.64-66]) mentre per Virgilio, acquisterà un senso profondo grazie all'intermediazione del poeta Giovenale che, una volta disceso nella 'casa comune' che il Limbo è per i poeti, gli comunicherà l'amore del poeta tolosano ("[...] Giovenale / che la tua affezion mi fé palese" [22.14-15]). Come si vede gli elementi per un amor cortese nella sua famosa variante di 'amore di lontano' ci sono tutti ed evidentemente questa è l'unica dimensione possibile dell'incontro visto che Virgilio non può ricevere da Stazio la opportunità di salvezza di cui invece questi gli è debitore. Ed è proprio per questo che, da una parte, Stazio, ringraziando esplicitamente Virgilio, tratterà il tema importantissimo di come egli ricevette il dono della fede e di come egli ebbe quella che Sapegno nel commentare il luogo chiama "iniziazione alla poesia", mentre Virgilio stesso dall'altra onorerà lo spirito di Stazio rendendolo formalmente partecipe del "senno" del Limbo ed 'investendolo' con un particolare "cenno" che è qui il "dir d'amor". Credo infatti che nell'episodio siano contenuti almeno tre segnali che provano il fatto che Dante, in una stringente allusività di tipo intratestuale, voglia esplicitamente 'citare' il quarto ed il quinto canto dell'*Inferno* in primo luogo per conferire formalmente a Stazio la qualifica di poeta degno del

sommo 'canone' del quarto canto, in seconda istanza per mostrare come l'amore di tipo virtuoso (e per di più letterario!) abbia lo stesso potere di costringere a riamare così come lo ebbe l'amore di tipo peccaminoso o passionale di cui furono vittime Paolo e Francesca (e per giunta con la complicità di un libro!) e poi, ultimo elemento, per connotare quel "cenno" – che per Dante era stato di spinta ed esortazione alla salvezza ("salutevol"), del semplice e profondo sentimento d'amore di tipo cortese che si respira in tutta la Cantica ed in toni piuttosto simili a questo soprattutto negli episodi di Casella, Sordello, Guido Guinizelli ed Arnaldo Daniello (e sorprendenti sono i riscontri nel tipo di lessico usato per descrivere gli slanci d'affetto, gli abbracci 'possibili' [Sordello e Virgilio che si abbracciano a dispetto della loro condizione di ombre in una peculiare incongruenza della Commedia] ed 'impossibili' [Dante e Casella, così come Enea ed Anchise ed anche Virgilio e Stazio] che si verificano durante questi riconoscimenti tra musicisti, trovatori e poeti). Il primo segnale che ci troviamo innanzi è quello dell'"amore di lontano": "[...] *Amore, l' acceso di virtù, sempre altro accese, / pur che la fiamma sua paresse fore; / onde de l' ora che tra noi discese / nel limbo de lo 'nferno Giovenale / che la tua affezion mi fé palese, / mia benvoglienza inverso te fu quale / più strinse mai di non vista persona [...]*" con l'evidente *variatio in imitando* di "amor che a nullo amato amar perdona" e con l'uso del verbo "strinse" usato per Lancillotto, protagonista di quella lettura che ebbe il potere di perdere per sempre Paolo e Francesca. La seconda allusione è la più scoperta ed equivale ad un *re-make* dell'investitura poetica di Dante nel quarto dell'*Inferno*, ma questa volta senza conciliabolo di una 'commissione' di poeti 'canonici' che "ragionano alquanto" e nella forma di una fraterna ed amichevole curiosità di Virgilio circa la situazione di Stazio ed il motivo della sua espiazione: "Ma dimmi, e *come amico* mi perdona / se troppa sicurtà m'allarga il freno / e *come amico* omai meco ragiona: / come poté trovar dentro al tuo seno / loco avarizia, *tra cotanto senno* / di quanto per tua cura fosti pieno?". Virgilio dà quindi per scontata l'elevatezza d'ingegno e di sentimenti di quello che egli chiama per ben due volte amico ed addirittura, a proposito di questa scontata elevatezza di animo e di ingegno del poeta tolosano, manifesta il suo stupore sul fatto che poesia ed avarizia possano esser congiunte; così Dante consegue il risultato poetico di porre una enfasi ancora maggiore sulla inconciliabilità del difetto in questione con la padronanza dell'arte. Stazio, infatti, non espia l'avarizia bensì il suo contrario (e cioè la prodigalità) e le parole di Virgilio sono raffinatamente 'prodighe' di elogi per l'amico e di umiltà per i suoi stessi meriti, quasi a voler smentire, in un tale contesto 'cortese', che la sua opera sia stata determinante per la salvezza di Stazio ("di quanto per tua cura fosti pieno") e a voler sottolineare *de facto* la magnanimità dei poeti. Il terzo ed ultimo segnale è strettamente connesso al precedente e consiste nella trasformazione del "salutevol cenno" (rivolto dai quattro poeti del 'canone' a Dante, dopo che essi hanno tenuto concilio su di lui e sulle sue qualità), nella sorridente constatazione di



Stazio che non può non riconoscere nelle parole di Virgilio un "caro cenno" di "dir d'amore" e cioè il calore dell'amicizia e dell'amor cortese di cui si è detto. Egli, ugualmente, non può fare a meno di rendere soddisfazione all'amico quasi rispondendo ad un complice segno convenzionale ed accetta l'onore che Virgilio gli rende con l'uso del vocabolo cenno il quale invece che "salutevole" qui per lui può essere solamente "caro" nel senso più esclusivo e struggente che la malinconica situazione di Virgilio, ancorché sottintesa, può evocare: "Queste parole Stazio mover fenno / un poco a *riso* pria; poscia rispuose: / Ogn tu dir d'amor m'è *caro cenno*".

L'ultima occorrenza della diade nel *Purgatorio* si ha significativamente negli ultimi quattro versi pronunciati da Virgilio all'indirizzo di Dante prima di scomparire (*Purg.* 27.139-142). L'iniziazione del discepolo è ormai ratificata e conclusa. Le viene solamente conferita una solenne veste formale perché essa si trova a coincidere con un congedo. Dante, dopo la sosta successiva al superamento del muro di fuoco (è notevole come Virgilio, per rianimare Dante che è colto da grande timore, gli menzioni l'episodio di Gerione [versi 22-24 dello stesso canto 27] ed il suo esito felice, episodio in cui come si è visto la diade "senno"-*"cenno"* ha la sua massima connotazione nel senso del disvelamento di un arcano: "Ricorditi, ricorditi! E se io / sovresso Gerion ti guidai salvo, / che farò ora presso più a Dio?") e necessaria per il riposo notturno, si risveglia. Al suo levarsi trova Virgilio e Stazio desti e pronti a salire sugli ultimi gradini della scala ed anche pronti a quello che Dante non sa ancora essere il commiato della sua guida ("[...] le tenebre fuggian da tutti lati / e 'l sonno mio con esse; ond'io leva'mi, / veggendo i *gran maestri* già levati" [112-14]: giustamente il Sapegno collega "gran maestri" a "gran marescalchi" di *Purg.* 24.99). A questo punto Virgilio ribadisce la vicinanza al conseguimento di quella felicità ("Quel dolce pome che per tanti rami / cercando va la cura de' mortali / oggi porrà in pace le tue fami" [115-17]) che è l'obiettivo di tutte le azioni umane ed in un certo senso rinsalda quell'aspettativa dell'incontro con Beatrice che già aveva instillato nell'animo di Dante proprio nei tribolatissimi istanti del passaggio attraverso il muro di fuoco ("[...] Or vedi figlio / tra Beatrice e te è questo muro" [35-36]). Il risultato della promessa di Virgilio è tonificante per l'anima di Dante ed esalta la forza del suo desiderio di ascesa e di purificazione. Il modo in cui Dante esprime questa esaltazione della volontà è straordinariamente vicino (se si studia l'uso che Dante fa delle due parole "ali" e "penne" nella *Commedia* si scopre che praticamente queste sono le uniche due occorrenze esattamente 'sovrapponibili' del poema: *Purg.* 27.121-23 e *Par.* 15.70-72) a quello con cui il poeta esprimerà il suo fortissimo desiderio di parlare con lo spirito che ignora esser quello del suo antenato Cacciaguida: *Purg.* 27.121-23: "Tanto voler sopra voler mi venne / de l'esser sù ch'ad ogni passo poi / al volo mi sentia *crescer le penne*"; *Par.* 15.70-72: "Io mi volsi a Beatrice e quella udio / pria ch'io parlassi, e arrisemi un *cenno* / che fece *crescer l'ali al voler mio*". Importante poi la ricorrenza del riso ("arrisemi") e della solita 'lettura del pen-

siero' che questa volta in una fine *variatio* rispetto all'episodio di Gerione (di cui era stato protagonista Virgilio) è colta come un 'udire prima che si parli' ('*udio pria ch'io parlassi*'). Terminata l'ascesa e quindi proprio al "grado superno", allo stesso tempo simbolico e concreto, delle fatiche sostenute durante il viaggio oltremondano insieme al coadiutore che rappresenta la massima virtù umana possibile senza intervento della Grazia ("Come la scala tutta sotto noi / fu corsa e fummo *in su 'l grado superno* / in me *ficcò* Virgilio *li occhi suoi* [...] [124-26]) ha luogo finalmente l'ultima allocuzione di Virgilio a Dante. Nell'allocuzione [vv. 127-42] si tira mirabilmente il capo del filo che congiunge tutta la serie di 'investiture', 'complicità' e possibili 'riconoscimenti' o 'annuizioni' fra personaggi di pari dignità o comunque legati dal legame privilegiato maestro-discepolo che abbiamo incontrato fin qui. Dico mirabilmente perché a ben vedere l'allocuzione di Virgilio è un piccolo capolavoro di retorica ed allo stesso tempo di 'classicismo', almeno per ciò che riguarda la struttura perfettamente simmetrica delle frasi, il ritmo perfetto dei cinque periodi ciascuno dei quali occupa una ed una sola terzina (ad esclusione, ovviamente, dell'ultimo verso, il 142 che è sì isolato, ma contiene la formula definitiva della liberazione di Dante dalla cattiva volontà e dalla tentazione) e la funzionalità non disgiunta dallo stile delle allusioni a tutta la precedente porzione dell'opera. Virgilio parte dalla constatazione letterale dell'entità del cammino compiuto per poi toccare il tema più allegorico della sua propria impossibilità a continuare l'opera di guida nel regno della Grazia e si rivolge a Dante per la terza volta in questo canto (20, 35, 128) con l'appellativo "figlio", in perfetta corrispondenza al "dolce padre" di verso 52 ("Lo *dolce padre mio*, per confortarmi, / pur di Beatrice *ragionando* andava, / dicendo "*Li occhi suoi* già veder parmi"). Ed il riferimento agli "occhi" ed alla "vista", portato avanti come vedremo anche nella quarta terzina, si fa vivo nel "discerno" e ci riporta alla catena Maria-Beatrice-Lucia (protettrice della vista, appunto e connessa all'idea della luce) ed allo stesso tempo ai versi d'addio e commiato con cui si chiudeva il quarto canto dell'*Inferno* ("La sesta compagnia in due *si scema* / per altra via mi mena il savio duca, / fuor de la queta, ne l'aura che trema. / E vegno in parte *ove non è che luca*"). Con in mente un ultimo richiamo al verbo "scemare" che sarà riusato da Dante nel momento in cui si accorgerà della scomparsa di Virgilio (*Purg.* 30.49-50: "[...] ma Virgilio n'avea lasciati *scemi* / di sé, Virgilio *dolcissimo patre* [...]"), leggiamo la prima terzina:

e disse "Il temporal foco e l'eterno  
veduto hai, figlio; e *se' venuto in parte*  
dov'io per me più oltre non *discerno*."

Nella seconda terzina Virgilio, in due *cola* perfettamente corrispondenti, che incastonano i due concetti ora non più antitetici "duce" e "piacere", riven-

dica l'importanza dell'"ingegno" e dell'"arte" che hanno permesso a Dante di superare sentieri "erti" (ripidi) ed "arti" (impervi) prima di recuperare una retta volontà a cui piace ciò che è giusto:

Tratto t'ho qui con *ingegno* e con *arte*;  
lo tuo *piacere* omai prendi per *duce*:  
fuor se 'de l'*erte* vie, fuor se 'de l'*arte*.

La terza terzina, quasi in una rievocazione-citazione della lucentezza di Catone, allude al sole della Grazia che risplende sul volto di Dante e riproduce, ma questa volta in un'atmosfera di grande speranza e non di disperazione, il *locus amoenus* che c'era nel Limbo dei pagani virtuosi e che qui si inverte nella pienezza dell'Eden (da notare ancora la perfetta simmetria di "sol" e "sol" attorno al perno del verso centrale come nella terzina precedente i due *cola* opportunamente evidenziati):

Vedi lo *sol* che 'n fronte ti *riluce*;  
vedi l'erbette, i fiori e li arbuscelli  
che qui la terra *sol* da sé *produce*

Nella quarta, nitida terzina c'è il ritorno al tema stilnovistico degli occhi di Beatrice, colti però nel loro esortare Virgilio il Venerdi Santo, quando avvenne la discesa al Limbo della donna-angelo, e a Dante è formalmente accordata la possibilità di riposare sul prato nell'attesa della 'epifania' di Beatrice (notevole il doppio uso del chiasmo per "venire", che incastona gli epiteti degli occhi, e per "puoi" che, al contrario, è incastonato fra i due verbi che esprimono il formale permesso del riposo):

Mentre che *vegnan lieti* li occhi *belli*  
che, lagrimando, a te *venir* mi fenno,  
*seder* ti *puoi* e *puoi andar* tra elli .

L'ultima terzina, col suo verso-coda che sancisce l'"espiiazione-iniziazione" del pellegrino ("per ch'io te sovra te *corono* e *mitrio*": qui c'è quella che potrebbe esser considerata una 'dittologia sinonimica' che però si arricchisce di sfumature, in relazione ai due 'poteri' ed ai due tipi di 'corte' che i verbi "corono" e "mitrio" evocano – se soltanto pensiamo ai connotati cavallereschi del rapporto fra poeti che abbiamo rintracciato ed al culminare del tema dell'"esame" nel colloquio con San Pietro), svincola Dante da ogni valutazione del suo arbitrio che, essendo giudicato retto, sano e libero, è per ciò stesso in possesso se non immediatamente della verità almeno del "senno" necessario per interpretarne il 'codice'. Dante è quindi pronto; virtualmente egli ha superato addirittura i limiti dell'appartenenza alla "bella scola":

“Non aspettar mio dir più né mio cenno;  
libero, dritto e sano è tuo arbitrio,  
e fallo fora non fare a suo senno:  
per ch'io te sovra te corono e mitrio”.

Veniamo quindi all'ultima occorrenza della coppia “cenno”-“senno” che è appunto quella del canto di Cacciaguida (*Par.* 15.25-75). È opportuno ricordare ciò che Cacciaguida rappresenta. Egli è l'avo di Dante e questo porta al ricongiungimento del poeta con il “suo stesso sangue” come fu per Enea nell'incontro con Anchise che è direttamente citato dal poeta (“[...] sì pia l'ombra d'Anchise si porse, / se fede merta *nostra maggior musa*, / quando in Eliso del figlio s'accorse”). Questo fatto, a sua volta, permette di estendere l'aura della presenza virgiliana anche a questo importantissimo punto del poema. Cacciaguida rappresenta allo stesso tempo la nobiltà di sangue e l'essenza profonda dell'appartenenza al mondo cavalleresco nel senso più umanamente dignitoso perché egli, prima di parlare di sé come cavaliere di Corrado III di Svevia in Terra Santa, rimprovera le manifestazioni esteriori del lusso e della corruzione dei costumi fiorentini; un rimprovero che culmina nel brevissimo chiasmo-catalogo di esempi negativi del presente contrapposti a quelli, neanche a dirlo, positivi della romanità: “Saria tenuta allor tal meraviglia / una Cianghella, un Lapo Salterello, / qual or saria Cincinnato e Corniglia. / *A così riposato, a così bello / viver di cittadini*, a così fida / *cittadinanza*, a così dolce ostello, / *Maria mi diè*, chiamata in alte grida; / e ne l'antico vostro Bati-steo / insieme fui cristiano e Cacciaguida. / Moronto fu mio frate ed Eliseo; / mia donna venne a me di val di Pado, / e quindi il soprannome tuo si feo. / Poi seguitai lo 'mperador Currado; / ed el mi cinse della sua milizia, / tanto per bene ovrar li venni in grado” (127-41). Notevole poi come anche qui, nell'elogio di Firenze, che riecheggia, riprende e completa l'invettiva di *Purg.* 6, il “viver bene” diventi “riposato” e “bello” ma resti pur sempre una personificazione a cui la Vergine consegna il pargoletto (ed a cui invece Atene e Sparta avevano solo annuito). Ho detto che questo è un punto importantissimo del poema proprio perché Dante riceverà da Cacciaguida un nuovo tipo di ‘investitura’ e quindi nuovi ardui compiti; credo che la onniscienza e cioè, oltre alla normale dottrina, anche la conoscenza del futuro dovuta alla beatitudine – tratto che collega i Beati a Dio stesso – sia la chiave della parola “senno” nella sua ultima occorrenza che si trova appunto in questo canto. I compiti assegnatigli da Cacciaguida sono inoltre tutti proiettati alla fine del viaggio ultramondano e riguardano la vita futura di Dante e, pertanto, non sono riconoscimenti dal valore retroattivo o istantaneo come la cooptazione nella “bella scola” o la liberazione dalla schiavitù del peccato ad opera della ‘corona’ e della ‘mitra’ di Virgilio. Il primo compito è ovviamente quello della preghiera e delle buone azioni per agevolare l'espiazione del figlio Alighiero: “Pocchia mi disse: Quel da cui si dice / tua cognazione e che cent'anni e più / girato ha 'l monte in la



prima cornice, / mio figlio fu e tuo bisavol fue: / ben si convien che la lunga fatica / tu li raccorci con l'opere tue" [91-96]. Il secondo, ma verrà chiaramente enunciato dall'antenato solo nel canto 17 del *Paradiso*, è conseguenza proprio di ciò che fa ardere Dante di desiderio (*Par.* 17.1-12 con la solita 'lettura del pensiero' operata da Beatrice e da Cacciaguida) ed è cioè la risposta agli interrogativi sul suo futuro. Cacciaguida gli predice l'esilio e la necessità di accettarlo con rassegnazione e senza odio per i suoi concittadini.

È a questo livello di conoscenza delle cose arcane che Dante si appellerà – spinto come sempre a manifestare la sua curiosità da Beatrice (siamo ancora nel canto 17 del *Paradiso* [13-27]) – e, cosa estremamente significativa, nel farlo citerà il nome di Virgilio, prima guida e primo maestro da cui egli fu messo al principio dentro le "segrete cose" e da cui fu accompagnato nel viaggio oltremondano così pieno di oscuri presagi intorno al suo futuro:

"O cara piota mia che sì t'insusi,  
che come veggion le terrene menti  
non capere in triangol due ottusi,  
così vedi le cose contingenti  
anzi che sieno in sé, mirando il punto  
a cui tutti li tempi son presenti;  
mentre ch'io era a Virgilio congiunto  
su per lo monte che l'anime cura  
e discendendo nel mondo defunto,  
dette mi fuor di mia vita futura  
parole gravi, avvegna ch'io mi senta  
ben tetragono ai colpi di ventura.  
Per che la voglia mia sarà contenta  
d'intender qual fortuna mi s'appressa;  
ché saetta previsa vien più lenta".

E così, tornando al primo impatto, al primo incontro con lo spirito di Cacciaguida (canto 15), credo si possa concludere la nostra analisi della diade "senno"-"cenno" notando come tutto l'insieme narratologico dei fatti che si accompagnano al tema dell'annuizione, della complice investitura, del maestro che 'capisce al volo' i dubbi e le curiosità di un discepolo e li scioglie e le soddisfa, sia anche in questo episodio del tutto rispettato.

Appena Cacciaguida si manifesta, citando, per così dire, Virgilio e parlando in latino, Beatrice sorride con la sicurezza che sempre accompagna le guide: "[...] poscia rivolsi a la mia donna il viso, / e quinci e quindi stupefatto fui; / ché dentro a li occhi suoi ardeva un riso / tal, ch'io pensai co' miei toccar lo fondo / de la mia gloria e del mio Paradiso" [32-36].

Quando Cacciaguida riprende la parola non manca di benedire Dio e di qualificare Dante con l'appellativo "cortese" riportandoci a quella solennità e serietà con cui Virgilio l'aveva 'mitriato' e 'coronato' e con cui i poeti della

“scola” avevano salutato il ritorno del loro compagno Virgilio: “la prima cosa che per me s’intese, / *‘Benedetto sia tu’*, fu, *‘trino e uno*, / che nel mio seme se’ tanto *cortese!*” [46-48].

Nella continuazione Cacciaguida lo chiama “figlio” e menziona poi Beatrice come colei che gli donò le “piume” per l’“alto volo”: “[...] *‘Grato e lontano digiuno*, / [...] *solvuto hai, figlio*, dentro a questo lume / in ch’io ti parlo, mercé di colei / *ch’a l’alto volo ti vestí le piume’*.” [49-54].

L’avo di Dante lascia poi intuire i suoi poteri, comuni peraltro a tutti i beati, di leggere il pensiero e rincuora Dante incoraggiandolo a formulare le sue domande (55-69) a cui la risposta di Cacciaguida è “decreta”, come abbiamo già detto, per volere divino.

Dante è quindi pronto a ricevere un “cenno” dalla sorridente Beatrice e ad alludere alla superiorità del “senno” che Cacciaguida rappresenta rivolgendosi a lui, di cui non conosce il nome, proprio apostrofandolo come partecipe di quell’amore e di quella superiore sapienza da cui egli si accinge a ricevere le direttive per il resto della vita che lo attende alla fine del viaggio. Si tratta dunque dell’ultimo grande viatico e dell’ultimo segreto da svelare, un segreto di cui il “codice” è per definizione iniconoscibile. È come se Cacciaguida, quale consanguineo, accogliesse Dante presso di sé come un “figliol prodigo”, visto anche che il Poeta suggerisce l’immagine ringraziando l’avo per “la paterna festa” [70-87]:

Io mi volsi a Beatrice, e quella udio  
 pria ch’io parlassi, e arrisemi un cenno  
 che fece crescer l’ali al voler mio.  
 Poi cominciai così: *‘l’affetto e ’l senno*,  
 come la prima equalità v’apparse,  
 d’un peso per ciascun di voi si fenno  
 però che *’l sol* che v’allumò e arse,  
 col *caldo* e con la *luce* è sì iguali,  
 che tutte simiglianze sono scarse .  
 Ma *voglia e argomento* ne’ mortali,  
 per la cagion ch’a voi è manifesta,  
*diversamente son pennuti in ali*;  
 ond’io, che son mortal, mi sento in questa  
 disagguaglianza e però non ringrazio  
 se non col core alla paterna festa.  
 Ben supplico io a te, vivo topazio  
 che questa gioia preziosa ingemmi,  
 perché mi facci del tuo nome sazio’.

Voglio da ultimo far notare la continua ricorrenza dell’illuminazione da parte del sole che qui chiude la serie ‘incontro con Catone-commiato da Virgilio-incontro con Cacciaguida’.



Il tema dell'esame e dell'investitura sarà ripreso, completato e portato alle sue estreme conseguenze, senza che appaia più la coppia "cenno"- "senno", ma in modo che ne sopravviva l'intero bagaglio di motivi e suggestioni che siamo venuti fin qui rintracciando, nell'episodio in cui il "barone" S. Pietro esamina e "tenta" sulla fede il "baccialliere" Dante.

Grazie a questo episodio, che si trova in *Par.* 24, Dante può davvero superare la "bella scola", la sua eredità e la sua stessa appartenenza ad essa. Egli, infatti, come il tema adombrato nel canto di Cacciaguida lasciava presagire, pone in una urgente attualità il rito dell'esame e dell'investitura e, mentre da una parte usa uno schiacciante riferimento al mondo universitario a lui contemporaneo (il paragone col "baccialliere" che difende una tesi di fronte ad un "maestro" dei versi 46-51), pone dall'altra come obiettivo ultimo del suo poetare (ed in ultima analisi della poesia in generale come arte) quello della promozione spirituale del genere umano e cioè proprio quel livello psicagogico a cui abbiamo spesso alluso. L'esame chiude il canto 24 e subito all'apertura del 25 vi è la chiara proclamazione del desiderio di Dante di essere incoronato poeta, inquantoché egli si sente a ciò legittimato dalla positiva valutazione di San Pietro (e non certo di quella espressa dalla "bella scola"!), e proprio nella sua patria: siamo lontanissimi dall'atmosfera 'marginale' di esilio dalla storia (cioè quella successiva alla venuta di Cristo, quella che sola conta) e dalla Grazia che era propria degli abitanti del Limbo. Dante, per giunta, spera di superare, di vincere proprio il suo personale 'esilio' anche grazie al suo poema (1-12):

Se mai continga che 'l poema sacro  
al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra,  
sì che m'ha fatto per molti anni macro,  
vinca la crudeltà che fuor mi serra  
del bello ovile ov'io dormi' agnello,  
nimico ai lupi che li danno guerra;  
con altra voce omai, con altro vello  
ritornerò poeta, e in sul fonte  
del mio battesimo prenderò 'l cappello;  
però che ne la fede, che fa conte  
l'anime a Dio, quivi intra'io, e poi  
Pietro per lei sì mi girò la fronte.

Su questa ultima tappa che dà il significato stesso del tema della investitura-iniziazione nel poema, nel viaggio del pellegrino Dante non solo attraverso i regni dell'oltretomba ma anche attraverso differenti gradi di sapere e differenti gradi di consapevolezza di questo sapere (Virgilio ed Omero non hanno alcun titolo per 'consacrare' ma possono soltanto investire un collega più fortunato dal punto di vista dei temi psicagogici della sua poesia!), non posso non citare il magnifico commento al passo di Natalino Sapegno, che, a sua volta, cita G. Getto:

Il canto [25] si apre con un movimento lirico, che è tra le note più umane di tutto il Poema, e al tempo stesso suggella il significato rituale di tutto l'episodio. Il rito dell'esame si trasforma in una cerimonia di consacrazione. Le note personali [...] si fondono con il tema di una missione universale. "L'incoronazione di Dante" significa anche "il riconoscimento della validità del suo messaggio".

Ma facciamo un passo indietro proprio per vedere meglio l'episodio dell'esame di cui abbiamo anticipato le conclusioni e le implicazioni (*Par.* 24.34-51). Anche in questo caso ritengo mirabile il giudizio di Sapegno in nota al verso 50, proprio perché coglie, forse in misura maggiore rispetto agli altri commentatori, il legame della 'situazione esame' con la ritualità e quindi in un certo modo avalla il nostro accostamento dell'episodio con il quarto canto dell'*Inferno* e con la rituale cooptazione di Dante nella "bella scola", al di là ovviamente dello scontato collegamento esame-bacelliere-scuola:

Il tono alto dell'apostrofe di Beatrice ai santi e del colloquio fra Beatrice e Pietro, e quella e questo tramati di immagini scitturali ed improntati a un decoro di cerimonia liturgica; l'immagine stessa del bacelliere, che insiste sull'atteggiamento di concentrata e tesa aspettazione di Dante e sull'importanza dell'atto a cui egli s'accinge e l'autorità di coloro che son chiamati a giudicarlo; costituiscono un solenne preludio all'episodio e ne determinano il carattere rituale e di solenne consacrazione e di suprema conferma alla missione morale e religiosa del poeta.

Beatrice invita San Pietro, chiamato "gran viro", a saggiare le conoscenze di Dante sulla fede (34-45):

Ed ella: "O luce etterna del *gran viro*  
a cui Nostro Signor lasciò le chiavi,  
*ch'ei portò giù*, di questo gaudio miro,  
tenta costui di punti lievi e gravi,  
come ti piace, intorno de la fede,  
per la qual tu su per lo mare andavi.  
S'elli ama bene e bene spera e crede,  
*non t'è occulto* perché *'l viso hai quivi*  
*dov'ogne cosa dipinta si vede*;  
ma perché questo *regno* ha fatto *civi*  
*per la verace fede*, a gloriarla,  
di lei parlare è ben ch'a lui arrivi."

Non resisto alla tentazione di amplificare il senso di quel "portar giù" nella direzione del *Descensus Christi ad Inferos* per la liberazione dei Patriarchi, di legare "regno" e "civi", al di là dell'immediata cifra evangelica, al 'regno' del nobile castello con i suoi sfortunati "viri" non liberati da Cristo come furono i Patriarchi (che infatti condividono il "gaudio miro") e di ribadire l'inveramento che l'esame di San Pietro costituisce per Dante, sottolineando come agli "dei falsi e bugiardi" si contrapponga quella che già lo stesso Virgilio (rivol-

gendosi a Stazio) aveva chiamato la "verace corte" dove c'è posto solamente per la "verace fede". Ho messo in risalto, inoltre, le parole di Beatrice che ripropongono il solito motivo della lettura della mente altrui comune a tutti i beati.

Quindi Dante instaura il paragone con lo studente universitario (non a caso delle scuole teologiche!) e definisce formalmente San Pietro "maestro" (un povero pescatore trasformato dal mistero della predestinazione in principe degli Apostoli, come lo stesso Dante dirà nei versi 109-110: "[...] ché tu intrasti povero e digiuno / in campo, a seminar la buona pianta [...]"):

Sì come il bacciallier s'arma e non parla  
fin che 'l maestro la question propone,  
per approvarla, non per terminarla,  
così m'armava io d'ogne ragione  
mentre ch'ella dicea, per esser presto  
a tal querente e a tal professione. (46-51)

Sopravvive peraltro anche il tema della complicità, quando Dante, prima di parlare, sebbene gliene abbia fatto richiesta San Pietro, che rappresenta di certo un grado di beatitudine più elevato di Beatrice o quanto meno una dignità funzionale più alta, chiede quasi permesso con lo sguardo alla "sua donna":

poi mi volsi a Beatrice, ed essa pronte  
sembianze femmi perch'io spandessi  
l'acqua di fuor del mio interno fonte. (55-57)

Credo che qui la coppia "cenno-senno" (che sarebbe stata perfettamente calzante) non venga usata per l'importante ragione che l'"iniziando" è ben al di dentro del 'codice', possiede cioè un "senno" che deve essere solo mostrato e non formato, cesellato o comunque riconosciuto da altri colleghi.

E se imitazione di un re nel Limbo era stato Omero ("come sire" e non già "sire", "*poeta sovrano*" e non già "sovrano"), qui nel Paradiso di Cristo San Pietro e come lui San Giacomo (nel successivo canto 25 del *Paradiso* appena dopo i versi già citati sull'incoronazione poetica) ed anche Ugo il Grande (*Par.* 16.127-30) sono senza esitazione definiti "baroni", nelle uniche tre occorrenze del poema, quasi ad insistere sul tema della necessità di una ratifica morale dei titoli nobiliari:

Finito questo, l'*alta corte santa*  
risonò per le spere un "Dio laudamo"  
ne la melode che là su si canta.  
E quel *baron* che sì di ramo in ramo,  
essaminando, già tratto m'avea,  
che a l'ultime fronde appressavamo,  
ricominciò [...] (112-18)

Dante ha così congiunto e fuso l'aspetto scolastico-universitario e quello epico-cavalleresco, che erano già *in nuce* nella cooptazione del pellegrino nella "bella scola" dei poeti del canone del canto 4 dell'*Inferno*, e che qui vengono così ampiamente ripresi ed esaustivamente sviluppati. Così anche negli ultimi versi che chiudono il canto credo che il trattamento 'feudale' del dialogo fra Dante e San Pietro, che qui è visto come un rendiconto patrimoniale tra un servo-amministratore ed un padrone, al di là dei facili riferimenti ai tanti servi ed alle tante vigne che nella Bibbia si trovano, valga come seria indicazione del livello 'cavalleresco' e 'nobiliare' che punteggia la *Commedia* sin dall'incontro del "nobile castello":

Come 'l segnor ch'ascolta quel che i piace,  
da indi abbraccia il servo, gratulando  
per la novella, tosto ch'el si tace;  
così, benedicendomi cantando,  
*tre volte cinse me*, sì com'io tacqui,  
l'appostolico lume *al cui comando*  
io avea detto: *sì nel dir li piacqui!* (148-54)

Voglio anche far notare come l'esser cinto tre volte dall'"apostolico lume" ricalchi in pieno, nella martellante insistenza sui temi 'cavalleresco e sacro', l'investitura a cavaliere di Cacciaguida (*Par.* 15.139-44). Corrado III ordina cavaliere l'antenato di Dante "per bene ovrar" e quindi il poeta torna ad enfatizzare l'importanza della nobiltà solo in quanto frutto di meriti personali che, se si leggono simultaneamente i due episodi, possono essere guerreschi o letterari ("sì nel dir li piacqui!"), a patto che la letteratura abbia una forza 'psicagogica', generi cioè un 'poema sacro' che, per la coscienza individuale e collettiva, abbia la stessa forza liberatoria e lo stesso impatto guerresco della Crociata a cui partecipò Cacciaguida.

Poi seguitai lo 'mperador Currado;  
*ed el mi cinse de la sua milizia,*  
*tanto per bene ovrar li venni in grado.*

Forzare una realtà di stile o di estetica in categorie prestabilite non è nostra intenzione, ma è pur chiaro che non ci si può sottrarre al richiamo evidente dei fatti.

Mi pare che una stringente strategia di tipo allusivo intratestuale che colleghi fra loro i luoghi citati sia a questo punto un fatto dimostrato. Fin qui niente di nuovo sotto il sole, poiché una strategia allusiva non è affatto strana in una *BuchKultur*. Ma ciò che mi interessa sottolineare è che questa allusività intratestuale dantesca deve fare i conti anche con la sostanza della poesia stessa, con il tipo di *medium* che viene impiegato. Voglio dire cioè che non tutte le connotazioni stilistiche di cui abbiamo parlato possono essere collocate sullo stesso



piano gerarchico. Ciò che infatti ha colpito chi scrive, è che le parole-chiave della nostra ricerca sono poste in rima di terzina, e cioè sono in una posizione privilegiata del verso, così come (in compagnia di quella iniziale) quella finale era la posizione privilegiata nell'esametro greco e in quello latino. I due termini "cenno" e "senno" si imprimono bene nella memoria e quello che ci si chiede a questo punto è se riescano nello scopo soltanto per un puro fatto visivo. La terzina dantesca è una unità stilistica generalmente molto indipendente e crediamo quindi che la coppia di termini che in essa si incastona determinando la rima possa aver facilmente giocato anche un ruolo diverso da quello puramente visivo. Alludo ad una dimensione di 'oralità' che molti stilemi danteschi ed anche alcuni versi perché ripetuti più volte o particolarmente espressivi da un punto di vista acustico ci porterebbero ad ipotizzare per la *Commedia* così come è stato fatto per i poemi omerici (basti pensare al "vuolsi così colà dove si puote" della prima cantica o ai versi come "papè satan papè satan aleppe"). Ciò che si è detto è da prendere *cum grano salis* nel senso che a nostro giudizio i due tipi possibili di fruizione convivono pacificamente nella poesia dantesca che può essere orale (anche se non nel senso rigoroso in cui Ong parla a proposito dell'Antico Testamento o Havelock di Omero) ed anche 'chirografica' o 'tipografica' – come direbbe Marshall McLuhan – apprezzabile cioè appieno solo con il testo sotto gli occhi. Importanti appoggi per questa nostra supposizione sono le letture pubbliche (e senza dubbio anche private, specialmente durante la sua composizione) a cui il lavoro fu presto destinato, la particolare struttura chiusa e 'concatenata' della terzina dantesca, che è un grande aiuto per la memoria, e, da ultimo, ma di non poco momento, la possibilità di una allusione di tipo intratestuale che presuppone di necessità la capacità di coinvolgere la memoria del lettore.<sup>5</sup> Questa memoria giocherà ovviamente sul macrolivello di importanti spie semantiche quali sono le parole "cenno" e "senno" di cui ci siamo occupati e che sono in rima di terzina e non agirà invece in modo altrettanto fulmineo per altro tipo di dettagli che porteranno invece ad apprezzare l'arte dantesca solo dopo una lettura più minuziosa svolta con il libro davanti agli occhi (ecco perché ho parlato di 'gerarchie').

Ciò che ci lascia abbastanza fiduciosi nell'indicare in questa direzione un fertile campo di indagine è che la tecnica dantesca di cui si è discusso e che, come si è visto, coinvolge luoghi del poema fra loro strutturalmente collegati, è da rintracciare anche per altre coppie di vocaboli in rima di terzina, quali "alimortali", "spalle-calle", "spalle-valle", "lasso-passo", "grazia-sazia" e "frontemonte". Nell'attesa di dare ai dati una veste appropriata non resta che ribadire le conclusioni a cui Gian Biagio Conte ci ha abituati dall'uscita del suo *Memoria dei poeti*: l'arte allusiva non ha limitazione di generi e di epoche e nel nostro caso essa potrebbe essere determinante per scoprire non solo come Dante 'lavorasse', ma anche come 'funzionasse' la sua memoria.

## NOTE

- 1 Per un inquadramento generale si rimanda al saggio introduttivo di Iannucci in *Dante e la "bella scola"*.
- 2 Un'analisi semantica consimile è quella di Bosco.
- 3 È qualcosa di cui Segre è consapevole quando scrive: "La *Divina Commedia* sta al culmine di altri due tipi di testi: il viaggio nell'altro mondo [...] e la visione dell'altro mondo [...]. Ma in questi due generi inietta anche elementi del viaggio allegorico. Del viaggio allegorico è la progressione degli insegnamenti, la presenza delle personificazioni, l'obbligo di esami per l'ammissione a livelli superiori di studio" (59).
- 4 Si veda l'esauriente contributo di Iannucci "Musical Imagery".
- 5 Ottima la trattazione di Ahem.

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## **“Si gran volume in piccola e manigevole forma”: Bindoni and Pasini’s 1535 edition of the *Orlando Furioso*\***

Francesco Bindoni and Maffeo Pasini operated one of the largest publishing houses in Venice during the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The partners specialized in popular genres such as chivalric literature, and between 1525 and 1542 they produced eight editions of Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*, a title that enjoyed wide success on the book market.<sup>2</sup> The most important of these editions, and one which holds a prominent place in the publishing history of the *Furioso* in the Cinquecento, was the octavo they issued in 1535, the first edition in which the text of the poem was printed with a set of paratexts.<sup>3</sup> Lodovico Dolce, the editor of the book, prepared two dedicatory letters, an “Apologia” in which he defends Ariosto from detractors, and three other paratexts designed to assist the readers: a glossary in which he explains some difficult words found in the *Furioso*; a list of the additions Ariosto made in the final version of the poem; and a table of characters listing their appearance in major episodes. This was the first time that the *Furioso* was given a paratextual apparatus, and it marked the beginning of a much-imitated editorial practice; over the course of the sixteenth century this practice would eventually see the text submerged by notes in the margins, by commentary preceding and following each canto, and by extensive critical material before and after the poem. The paratexts in the Bindoni and Pasini edition are relatively brief, but they represent a significant source for the early reception of the *Furioso*, since they reflect and enact the well-defined marketing strategy that Bindoni and Pasini had developed in response to the book’s intended public. The principal concern of this article will be to identify how the paratexts and the typographical features of the octavo reveal the readers foreseen by Dolce and the publishers and to illustrate the ways in which the book was intended to serve the strategies those readers used in approaching the *Furioso*.<sup>4</sup> The examination of the edition is made from the perspective of historical bibliography, and the analysis proceeds from the assumption that the material forms by which texts are reproduced and transmitted are fundamental to the study of their reception.

A brief outline on the *Furioso*’s history in print will provide the necessary context for the discussion to follow. By the time Bindoni and Pasini published their edition in 1535, Ariosto’s work had already established itself as a ‘best-

seller.' Since the appearance of the *princeps* in Ferrara in 1516, the work had been issued in 21 additional editions, most of which were printed in Venice, although Florence, Ferrara, and Milan each produced at least one edition.<sup>5</sup> These were printed in accordance with one of two typographical models: quartos in roman letter, sometimes illustrated, meant for the upper, more cultivated segment of the book market that could afford this large format; and smaller octavos intended for the lower end of the market, without illustrations and usually in gothic types.<sup>6</sup> These two models were therefore designed to respond to the demands of different readerships. On this point, the editions of the *Furioso* under consideration reflected basic typographical trends of the time, and a brief divergence to consider the question of the relationship between the physical features of Cinquecento books and their intended readership or buyers will illuminate fundamental aspects of the 1535 *Furioso*.<sup>7</sup> Book historians generally agree on a basic typology for the early part of the sixteenth century in Italy: books in quarto were made for a cultivated class of readers that included humanists, nobles, civil servants, and members of courtly society in general, while the smaller octavos were for "popular readers," those "ordinary readers of little learning and lower social status" (Grendler 453).<sup>8</sup> This dichotomy hinges on a structural fact with fundamental implications for the cost of books: an octavo gathering contains twice as many leaves as a quarto gathering folded from the same sheet, which means that a text printed in octavo and with the use of a smaller typeface requires half as much paper to produce as the same text printed in the larger format; the consequent saving reduces the cost of individual copies, placing them within the reach of less affluent readers. The differences in format also involved other important divergences: quartos tended to be printed in roman, a style of typeface derived from humanist script, and octavos in gothic, considered by printers in Italy to be cruder;<sup>9</sup> quartos tended to be used for texts in either Latin or Italian, but octavos only for those in the vernacular; the larger format carried classical texts, but also contemporary literary works, while the smaller one was used almost exclusively for books of piety and other genres that were "within the intellectual grasp" of popular readers (Grendler 453). This typology, which held true well into the 1540s, was not absolute.<sup>10</sup> Chivalric literature, for example, was a favourite genre of both general classes of reader, enjoying the favour of both "il pubblico della corte" and "il pubblico della piazza" (Beer 245). Its wide circulation did not, however, affect the basic typographic pattern just described – the aristocratic public read it in quarto volumes in roman letter, popular readers used octavos in gothic.<sup>11</sup>

Bindoni and Pasini published four editions of the *Furioso* before 1535: in octavo in 1525, 1530, and 1533, and in quarto in 1531.<sup>12</sup> Since the partners followed the conventions outlined above, these editions did not present major innovations in the typographic form of the *Furioso*.<sup>13</sup> In 1535, however, they enacted a fundamental change in the presentation of the poem. This change did

not involve any of the major physical features of the book: the text of the poem is set in the usual typeface employed for octavo editions, gothic, and in the typical layout of two columns of five stanzas each. As in previous editions in this format, there are no illustrations to the cantos, but a woodcut showing a hand with scissors above two serpents appears on the title-page, and a woodcut portrait of Ariosto is found at the end of the book. Both were copies of blocks first used in the definitive *Furioso* printed by Francesco Rosso in Ferrara in 1532, and other editions of the poem with their own copies of these blocks had already appeared. Bindoni and Pasini themselves had used still another portrait cut in their 1531 and 1533 editions.<sup>14</sup> The innovation consisted instead in the addition of a series of paratexts designed to assist the readers of the poem.<sup>15</sup> In essence, the partners had taken the typographical model designed for the popular market and added a paratextual apparatus. Supplementary material designed to aid readers had long been a feature of editions of classical texts, and more recently it had been used in editions of vernacular works such as those of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, but this was its first appearance with the *Furioso*.<sup>16</sup>

Bindoni and Pasini's motivation was commercial, and it reflected changes in the book market. As Brian Richardson explains in *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy*, the constant increase in book production during the 1530s resulted in greater competition among Italian publishers, especially those who served the "less experienced readers" (91) who bought editions of vernacular texts. With the rise of literacy, these readers were growing in numbers, and their needs and expectations, in particular those of the "younger and female readers and the less well educated" (91), were not being sufficiently met by the books produced at the time. In an attempt to attract this growing sector of the market, editors were hired to provide paratextual material designed to assist readers in reading and interpreting the texts they bought.<sup>17</sup>

For their 1535 edition of the *Furioso*, Bindoni and Pasini turned to Lodovico Dolce, a *poligrafo* whose long and prolific career as an editor, translator, and printing-house consultant in the Venetian publishing world is a testament to his ability to respond to the needs of Cinquecento readers.<sup>18</sup> Dolce revised the text for publication, and he prepared the set of paratexts.<sup>19</sup> That the objective of these labours was to create a more attractive and competitive product is evident from the title-page. It announces that this *Furioso* is "NOVISSIMAMENTE STAMPATO E CORRETTO" and that it includes "LA GIUNTA" (i.e., the additions that Ariosto made in the third and final version printed in 1532), and it goes on to list "Una Apologia di M. Lodovico Dolcio contra ai detrattori dell'Autore, & un modo brevissimo di trovar le cose aggiunte; e TAVOLA di tutto quello, ch'è contenuto nel Libro. Aggiuntovi una breve esposizione dei luoghi difficili."<sup>20</sup> Formulaic claims regarding the quality of the text, the newness of the edition, the presence of *giunte*, and the inclusion

of supplementary material were commonly made by publishers of the period in order to differentiate a book from its competitors on the market.<sup>21</sup> Bindoni and Pasini made sure to advertise these very features of their edition on the title-page, the part of the book first seen by potential buyers and hence the best suited for promotional purposes. The privileged position of the title-page also renders it instrumental in establishing the typographical identity of the book, and here too the partners proved efficient. The legibility and clarity of the relatively lengthy title-page text is ensured by setting it in two sizes of roman capital letters and a smaller italic font, and by organizing it around the central woodcut illustration showing the serpents device. This balanced layout also gives further emphasis to the illustration, which already constitutes the visual center of gravity on the page. In this way, the title-page gives a distinctive and bold 'face' to the book, setting it apart from other titles in a bookshop and drawing to it the customer's eye. The title-page was a crucial instrument in the marketing of a book, and the most immediate expression of the publishers' strategy vis-à-vis the buyers they foresaw. This one reveals that Bindoni and Pasini had a clear understanding of their *Furioso*'s intended market and of the ways to tailor the typographical presentation and textual content of their product to respond to that market's tastes and expectations.

Their calculated strategy is evident throughout the paratextual material their editor prepared. On the verso of the title-page is printed the letter to the book's dedicatee, Gasparo Spinelli, Dolce's cousin and *gran cancelliere* of the Kingdom of Cyprus. Here, Dolce heaps praise on Ariosto, the *Furioso*, himself, and Spinelli:

Ma tra quei pochi; che in questa nostra età han.ro con ragione vendicato il nome di Poeta nella volgar lingua, hoggi di in gran pregio havuta; il nobile & eccellentissimo Messer Lodovico Ariosto non è da esser riputato l'ultimo; anzi tra quanti di Ottave Rime hanno lassato alcun Poema (e forse che lascieranno) senza alcun dubbio il primo. Essendosi adunque hora il suo leggiadrissimo Furioso per opera del Pasini impresso, piu corretto; s'io non mi inganno, di quanti hoggi vanno a torno, e piu commod anchora, (nel quale io per l'affettione, che meritamente portai sempre al suo Autore, non piccola fatica ho usato) parvemi etian dio che non poca parte d'ornamento se gli potesse accrescere; quando egli sotto il gentile nome vostro uscisse fuori. (l. A1v)

In claiming that this *Furioso* is "more correct" and "easier to use" than other editions, Dolce is not only extolling the distinctive features of the octavo, he is also drawing attention to his own role in creating those features.<sup>22</sup>

In a second letter, which immediately follows the text of the poem, Dolce praises a Venetian noble, Pietro Giustiniano, and dedicates to him the "Apologia," "che hora vi mando insieme con quel libro da voi tanto amato e tenuto caro" (l. 2h4v). That the "Apologia" should be given its own dedicatory letter is indicative of the importance attached to it by the publishers and



by the editor, who in writing it became the first commentator of the *Furioso*. Taking up 11 pages of close-set type, it is the longest paratext appended to the edition. It is directed against Ariosto's detractors, as its full title makes clear: "APOLOGIA DI MESSER LODOVICO DOLCIO CONTRA AI DETRATTORI DELL'ARIOSTO A GLI STUDIOSI DELLA VOLGAR POESIA." Addressing his "benigni Lettori," Dolce begins by explaining that the unjust criticisms of unspecified "maligne lingue" have moved him to take up the defence of Ariosto and the *Furioso* on behalf of the poet's admirers, and thus "espurgar l'Ariosto dai biasimi de gli ignoranti" (ll. 11r-21v). He then proceeds to list the criticisms commonly moved against Ariosto – regarding his choice of title, his language and style, his imitations, and the additions he made to the last revision of the *Furioso* – and to refute each one in turn.<sup>23</sup> Dolce, however, does not develop a systematic critical assessment of the *Orlando Furioso*, and the "Apologia" remains in essence a polemic that challenges the objections raised against Ariosto in order to praise his poem and, by implication, this particular edition. Nevertheless, it is of fundamental importance in the history of Ariostan criticism: aside from its chronological primacy as the first defence of the *Furioso*, it is a rare document of the critical concerns that characterized the reception of the work in its earliest phases.<sup>24</sup>

The "Apologia" is of equal importance in that it makes explicit Bindoni and Pasini's marketing plan, as is evident in several passages which deviate from Dolce's stated intent. For example, he devotes several lines to praising Ariosto's *Satire* and his comedies:

Ne mi pare di tacer in questo luoco l'elegantia, forza, e vivacità, che egli ha havuto piu ch'ogn'altro nel scriver Satyre in questa lingua; quanta si vede nelle cinque (che tante apunto ne sono) dopo la sua morte uscite in luce; & oltre a cio non è da trapassar tacendo il verso da lui imaginato & appropriato alla Volgar Comedia, quale nel suo Negromante e l'altre appresso si conosce, che tosto verranno fuori [...]. (l. 216r)

Indeed, Bindoni and Pasini printed two editions of the *Negromante* in March of 1535, and an edition of the *Lena* in May, all edited by Dolce. In the same year, the partners also printed the *Satire*.<sup>25</sup> The *Furioso*, therefore, was the first and central element of an editorial program designed to exploit the popular demand for Ariosto's works by providing a full range of his works in affordable editions – all but one of the books cited are in the smaller and cheaper octavo format. In keeping with this program, Dolce uses his "Apologia," ostensibly a critical defence of the *Furioso*, as a vehicle to advertise the other Ariosto titles in Bindoni and Pasini's catalogue, titles which would have likely appealed to readers of the poem. The programmatic unity of this undertaking is apparent in the dedication of *La Lena*, addressed to Pietro Aretino, where Dolce speaks of the "pietosa fatica mia di haver dato in publico [...] a questi giorni correttamente & in bella forma sotto il nome vostro, il Negromante" (l. A 1v). He also

attacks an unspecified edition of *La Lena* which has been printed "in modo guasta e lacerata, che ella in se non ritiene apena altro di buono e di regolato che il nome" (l. A1v); its text is replete with errors, but his own edition is "non senza qualche mia fatica da infiniti errori espurgata" (l. A2r). The editor, therefore, promotes the comedies using the same technique that he employs in the first dedicatory letter of the *Furioso* – decrying the textual shortcomings of other editions on the market and stressing the correctness of his own.

In another digression, this one taking up almost a full page of the "Apologia," Dolce weaves an extended tribute to the poetic virtues of Aretino, mentioning several of his friend's works about to be printed or already out. For example:

Nel tarderanno punto le molte occupationi; che di continuo gli sopraggiungono, nello scrivere a diversi Principi, che l'honorano; che fra pochi giorni, (com'io spero) non mandi fuori il suo gran Volume hoggi col titolo d'Angelica [...]. Ma di quanto egli sia nella prosa mirabile non meno, che nel verso; fino a qui pienissimo argomento fanno le due Comedie, non molti di sono uscite in luce [...] (ll. 2I4r-2I4v)<sup>26</sup>

This passage echoes the second part of the dedicatory letter included in both editions of *Il Negromante*, which praises Aretino and some of the same works in similar laudatory tones (l. A2r).<sup>27</sup> None of the titles mentioned in any of these instances seems to have been published by Bindoni and Pasini, so it is fair to consider the reasons behind the publicity the partners afforded an author not on their catalogue.<sup>28</sup> It is likely that Dolce's friendship with Aretino was a factor, and that he would be naturally motivated to advertise the latter's books.<sup>29</sup> It is even more probable, given the close attention they evidently devoted to this edition and the control they would have consequently exerted on their editor, that the publishers sought to draw attention to their product by including florid references to a famous author who enjoyed great success with the reading public. Dolce, in what is a relatively brief text in which he endeavoured to limit his comments "per non accrescer il Libro" (l. 2I1v), consequently devotes considerable attention to matters extraneous to his stated intent but instrumental to the publishers' interests.

The edition's intended readers are identified in explicit terms. Near the end of the "Apologia," Dolce, having listed some of the paratexts that Pasini included in the edition, describes the "Dechiaratione di alcuni vocaboli e luoghi difficili dell'opera," printed on ll. 2I6v-2I7v:

Appresso a questo ha voluto aggiungere la dechiaratione d'alcuni vocaboli, che nel volume si trovano, al quanto oscuri per non esser accettati dall'uso commune, se non di raro, e dilucidar anchora la sententia di alcune comparationi esponendo l' historie in quelle con circonlocutioni comprese: non per altro che per servir al commodo del



lettore non molto esercitato nella lingua: e di quelli; che non hanno cognitione delle latine lettere [...]. (l. 216r)

Dolce prepared this brief glossary of obscure words with the clear intention of helping “the reader who was inexperienced in the literary vernacular and those ignorant of Latin literature.”<sup>30</sup> The ideal readers of this edition, therefore, were those who had been swelling the ranks of the reading public in the 1530s, the very readers who constituted the core of Bindoni and Pasini’s customer base. Aware of their cultural level, the publishers and their editor responded with tools designed to meet their needs, a response which was typical and which explains the success of the firm.

As mentioned above, at the end of the “Apologia” Dolce commends Pasini, whose diligence has resulted in an edition with several useful features:<sup>31</sup>

In questo mezzo mi parrebbe che si dovesse ascrivermi a vitio; se io non vi commendasse la diligenza del Pasini vostro: il quale oltra che vi porge si gran volume in piccola e manigevole forma, e correttissimo per quanto hora ha potuto; s’è ingegnato etandio non senza molta sua fatica a sodisfatione vostra di darvi a conoscer con maravigliosa facilità tutto quello, ch’è stato dall’Ariosto aggiunto: & oltre a cio qualunque novella o historia si contiene nel libro per tutto il continuar di quelle con una brieve e facilissima tavola: per modo che ciascuno potrà legger quello, che piu gli piacerà senza fatica di travolger tutta l’opera. (l. 216r)

These comments, in addition to promoting the paratexts that follow the “Apologia,” illustrate the interdependence that exists between the textual, paratextual, and material aspects of the edition. First, Dolce identifies the advantages of the book’s format, which allows Pasini to offer a lengthy text in a small and easily handled size (“si gran volume in piccola e manigevole forma”). When he refers to the “Breve modo di trovar tutti i luoghi dall’Autore aggiunti,” a list of the additions Ariosto made in the final version of the poem, he emphasizes the “marvelous ease” with which these can now be found.<sup>32</sup> Finally, he mentions the last paratext appended to the edition, the “Tavola delle Historie e Novelle contenute di tutta l’Opera,” which is a table of characters listing their appearance in major episodes and *novelle*.<sup>33</sup> Dolce stresses that this “brieve e facilissima tavola” allows one to find favourite passages without “la fatica di travolger tutta l’opera.” The importance of these two indices is such that the points Dolce makes in the “Apologia” warrant reiteration. In the brief note titled “Mapheo Pasini alli Lettori” and placed immediately before the two paratexts, the publisher writes:

Perche adunque sono alcuni; i quali si dilettono di saper le cose dall’Ariosto aggiunte; senza fatica di legger tutto il libro: & appresso estimando di molto piacere ai leggenti il poter con facilità trovar quello, che loro piu aggrada di legger: habbiam notato qui di

sotto l'ordine da per se chiaro, e la Tavola; per i quali duoi modi ciascuno potra servendosi a suo piacere fuggir il fastidio e la fatica di volger piu carte. (2I8r)

Pasini and Dolce foreground the material difficulties inherent in handling a book with a text as lengthy as that of the *Furioso* in order to advertise the practical advantages offered by the smaller octavo format and by the paratexts. In Pasini's description of these paratexts – i.e., they allow readers to locate the passages they want to read “without the toil of reading the entire book” and to avoid “the bother and trouble of turning many pages” – there is also an implicit recognition of the further challenges posed by the narrative complexities of the *Furioso*: readers require assistance not simply to find specific passages, but also to follow individual narrative threads in the highly discontinuous poem.

The list of additions and the “Tavola” are not the only means by which the publisher and his editor have responded to this perceived need. The two paratexts are not simple lists of leaf references: as is explained clearly in their titles, each one of these references is keyed to the text of the *Furioso* by a marginal note printed beside the relevant passage.<sup>34</sup> These marginal notations represent a significant moment in the evolution of the *Furioso*'s typographical form, for this is the first time that the text shares the page with extratextual matter. More importantly, the notations and the two indices constitute a reference system that enables readers to pinpoint passages quickly and easily. The different elements of the edition, therefore, are not disparate parts, but they function together as a carefully conceived whole. The publishers were following a common promotional practice when they advertised the paratexts prominently on the title-page, in the “Apologia,” and in the note to the reader, but it is also likely that they intended to make certain that the value of these features was communicated to potential buyers.

The particular integration of text and paratext engineered by Dolce and the publishers was meant to serve the various strategies that they envisioned would be deployed to read the *Furioso*. Since their presentation of the work was successful and often copied (as will be seen below), this edition not only reflects their preconceptions, but it also reveals basic evidence of the ways in which the poem was actually read. The comment that readers will use the “Tavola” to find “quello, che loro piu aggrada di legger” (l. 2I8r) indicates that the *Furioso* was already familiar to them, either through personal reading or by having heard it read aloud; it also suggests that the text, or more specifically, favourite passages within it were the object of repeated readings. The list of additions would have attracted those who knew the *Furioso* in an earlier version and wanted to read only the new material. It would also have been useful as a reference tool to those interested in comparing the different versions – poets, perhaps, or scholars. But it is the system of cross-referencing created by the “Tavola” and the marginal notations that represents the best evidence of the reading practices applied to the *Furioso* in the 1530s. In the “Apologia,” Dolce writes that Pasini

took great pains “a sodisfatione vostra di darvi a conoscer con maravigliosa facilità [...] qualunque novella o historia si contiene nel libro per tutto il continuar di quelle con una brieve e facilissima tavola” (l. 216r). In the title of the “Tavola,” he notes that the leaf references listed therein “dimostrano con facilità il principiar e continuar di quelle [historie e novelle]. e pongasi mente, che sempre trovarassi posto in margine il nome di quello, che si vorrà leggere” (l. 218v). In other words, these paratexts can help to overcome the discontinuity created by Ariosto’s frequent narrative breaks and constant shifts between multiple plot lines: readers can use them to piece together and follow a single narrative line, and thus read it as a discrete unit, independently of the rest of the text. It is precisely the reader who engages in this kind of personalized, selective, and non-consecutive reading of the *Furioso* who encounters “fastidio” and “fatica” in turning over the pages of the whole book, a problem that a reader who follows an orderly, linear progress through the text does not experience despite the book’s bulk.

As is evident, Dolce had understood the implications for readers of a fundamental and problematic characteristic of the text. In later decades, critics sought to justify and seek solutions to the *Furioso*’s lack of continuity on theoretical grounds, or they used it to attack the poem. The publishers and their editor here moved to remedy it with their indices and marginal notations – a bibliographical solution involving the paratexts and typographical elements such as the layout (i.e., the use of the margins). It is true that their motivation was primarily commercial, and that their intention was to make a product that readers would purchase, but it is also apparent that their understanding, or at least Dolce’s, of their readers’ habits was rather sophisticated. The paratexts, and their integration with the text, were founded upon a clear awareness of the various reading practices they were meant to support. It is the use which readers made or wanted to make of the *Furioso* that governed Dolce and Pasini’s decisions regarding the edition, and the paratexts were devised in order to be useful to readers. This principle of practical utility and function was a manifestation of the economic forces that shaped publishing, but it implied an understanding of the modes of reading applied to the *Furioso*.

Dolce’s paratexts exploited the edition’s fundamental physical characteristic, its size: this book was affordable, easy to handle, and it allowed the reader to navigate the text conveniently and quickly. Bindoni and Pasini, in short, were selling the practical advantages of the Renaissance equivalent of the modern paperback to a specific sector of the book-buying public, the readers who had bought the *Furioso* in the octavo format since the 1520s. Their product was innovative; it possessed a distinct advantage over its competitors on the market, and it was commercially successful. This edition introduced a formula for printing the *Furioso* in octavo that was copied by all successive editions in this format for several years. Between 1535 and the appearance of the first *Furioso* by the Venetian publisher Gabriele Giolito, seven other octavo editions of the



poem were published.<sup>35</sup> All followed the basic typographical model – gothic letter for the main text and paratexts to assist readers – established by Bindoni and Pasini in 1535. There are some divergences, which is inevitable considering the number of printers involved: in some editions, the serpents device on the title-page is replaced by the portrait of Ariosto, in all probability because the printer lacked a copy of the device; some editions lack a number of the Bindoni and Pasini paratexts, or place them in a different order, or add different ones.<sup>36</sup> These departures, however, do not alter the basic formula established in 1535, and its repeated appearance bears witness to the satisfaction of readers. The success of the Bindoni and Pasini formula lasted until Giolito introduced new models for the typographic presentation of the *Furioso* with the quarto and the octavo he published in 1542 and 1543, respectively. Previous models were rendered obsolete by the success of these editions, and Bindoni and Pasini did not print Ariosto's text after 1542.<sup>37</sup> One the major features of the Giolito editions was a substantial and complex paratextual apparatus prepared by the editor who was to become the publisher's major collaborator, Lodovico Dolce.

The Bindoni and Pasini edition illustrates the significant role played by publishers and editors in the diffusion and reception of literary texts in sixteenth-century Italy. Bindoni and Pasini chose a specific market for their *Furioso*, and then, with the assistance of Dolce, they ascertained the cultural preparation and reading habits of the buyers they had targeted. These factors guided them in choosing the typographic characteristics and presentation of the edition, and in determining the structure and content of the paratexts. The book is both the result and the expression of their intentions, and by examining it as a material artefact, as a bibliographical fact, those intentions can in large part be recovered. Bindoni and Pasini operated in the highly competitive world of the Venetian publishing industry; hence they were motivated primarily by the economic imperatives basic to producing a commodity that consumers would purchase. But if a book is a commodity, it is also a text, and its buyers are also readers. The partners needed to consider and to respond to the textual nature of their product and to tailor it to meet the needs of their readers, but the book itself, once produced, affected the ways in which these readers responded to the text. As a consequence, the octavo partakes of the dynamic fundamental to the nature of all books: a book is shaped by its intended readership and yet it conditions actual reading. Publishers and editors, therefore, enact a complex mediation between text and reader, and this mediating function is embodied in the material object they produce.<sup>38</sup> The importance of this particular mediation of the *Furioso* lies in the fact that it gained wide currency. The response of Dolce and the publishers to the perceived demands and tastes of their intended readership proved to be successful, and the innovative presentation of the *Furioso* they designed was much imitated in the 1530s. We can be certain, therefore, that these books and their paratexts were in fact used to read the *Furioso*, and that they effectively conditioned its reception. By studying them as biblio-



graphical artefacts, we can arrive at a more historically accurate understanding of the interpretations of Ariosto's text during this period, and we can gain a more detailed sense of general reading practices in the Cinquecento.

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## APPENDIX: BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE EDITION

In the transcriptions, underlining indicates text set in gothic types. Transcriptions are in quasi-facsimile: characters are shown as they occur on the printed page, and words and punctuation marks printed together without spaces are not separated. A bar used over vowels to indicate an abbreviation has been rendered here as an umlaut (i.e., ä, ë, ö). Abbreviation symbols are shown in their actual form, i.e. ʔ for "con," and ⁊ for the ampersand. The various forms of the long s, some with a descender and others without one, are all given with descenders.

Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*. Venezia, Francesco Bindoni e Maffeo Pasini. 1535.

*Title-page.* ORLANDO FVRIOSO | DI MESSER LVDOVICO ARIOSTO | CON LA GIVNTA, NOVISSI= | MAMENTE STAMPATO | E CORRETTO. | [a woodcut serpents device, 70 x 52 mm, and on its left and right sides the motto 'DILEXISTI MALITIAM | SVPER BENIGNITATEM.']. | CON Vna Apologia di M. Lodouico Dolcio contra ai | detrattori dell' Autore, & vn modo breuiffimo di tro | uar le cose aggiunte ; e TAVOLA di tutto | quello, ch'è contenuto nel Libro. Aggiuntoui | vna breue esposizione dei luoghi difficili. | Haffi la concessione del Senato Veneto per anni diece. | Appresso Mapheo Pafini. | [rule: 25 mm] | M D XXXV.

*Colophon.* Impresso in Vinegia appresso di Mapheo Pafini, | ⁊ Francesco di Alessandro Bindoni, compagni. | Negli anni del Signore. M . D . X X X V .

8°: A-2G<sup>8</sup> 2H<sup>4</sup> 2I<sup>8</sup> 2K<sup>4</sup>. 256 ll., ff. [1] 2-244 [12]. \$4 (-A1).

## CONTENTS

[A1r] Title-page.

[A1v] Dedicatory letter: 'AL MAGNIFICO ET ECCELLENTE M. | GASPARO SPINELLI, GRAN CAN | CELLIERE DEL REGNO DI CI | PRI

SVO CVGINO, I LODOVICO DOLCIO. I L<sup>3</sup> A POETICA *Magn. & eccellente.M.Gaſparo [...]*’.

[A2r] Head-title: ‘ORLANDO FVRIOSO DI MESSER LVDO I VICO ARIOSTO NOBILE FERRARESE ALLO I ILLVSTRISSIMO E REVERENDISSIMO CAR I DINALE DONNO HIPPOLYTO DA I ESTE SVO SIGNORE. I CANTO PRIMO. I L<sup>2</sup> E dōne.icauallier [... 2 coll. x 4 stanzas]’.

[A2r–2H4r] *OF* text. 46 cantos.

[2H4r] End of *OF*: ‘[2 coll. x 2 stanzas] I IL FINE. I PRO BONO MALVM.’

[2H4v] Dedicatory letter: ‘AL MAGNIFICO E NOBILISSIMO MES= I SER *Pietro Giuſtiniano Gentilhuomo Venitiano* I LODOVICO DOLCIO. I N<sup>5</sup> ON è dubbio, Nobiliſſimo Meſſer Pietro [...]’.

[2I1r–2I6r] Dolce’s “Apologia”: ‘APOLOGIA DI M. LODOVICO DOL I CIO CONTRA AI DETRATTO= I RI DELL’ARIOSTO A GLI I STVDIOSI DELLA VOL I GAR POESIA. I i<sup>5</sup> O penſaua benigni Lettori [...]’.

[2I6v–2I7v] Glossary of difficult terms: ‘Dechiaratione di alcuni vocaboli e I luoghi difficili dell’opera. I a car. 105 A brano a brano [...]’.

[2I8r] Pasini’s note to the readers/List of *aggiunte*: ‘Mapheo Paſini alli Lettori A<sup>3</sup> Lcune altre cole [...] || Breue modo di trouar tutti i luoghi dall’ Autore aggiunti I per annotatione di numero .di Cati.e di carte. E ſempre I doue ſara aggiuto.troueraſſe notato in margine No I uo, e tinuera detta aggiunta fin al loco.doue ſi I trouera notato fuora in margine, Vecchio. I Nel Canto nono a carte. 34 . Incomincia la prima giunta; e ſegue fin nel decimo a carte.41 [...]’.

[2I8v–2K1v] Table of characters and episodes: ‘Tauola delle Hiſtorie e Nouelle contenute di tutta l’Opera per I ordine di alphabeto ⁂ per annotatione di numeri di car I te:quali numeri dimoſtrano con facilità il princi– I piar e continuar di quelle. e pongaſi mente. I che ſempre trouaſſi poſto in mar I gine il nome di quello.che I ſi vorrà leggere. I A I Angelica a carte 2. 3. 31 [...] I [at the foot of 2K1v] IL FINE.’

[2K2r] Colophon/Register: ‘[colophon] I REGISTRO. I A B C [...] S T V I X Y Z AA BB [ ... ] II κκ. I Tutti ſono quaderni eccetto HH e KK. che ſono duerni. I [device of the Bindoni and Pasini firm, showing Tobias and the archangel Raphael, 50 x 38 mm; see Zappella 1.57 and 2, fig. 91]’.

[2K2v] Woodcut portrait of Ariosto, 98 x 74 mm.

[2K3, 2K4] Blank.

## TYPOGRAPHY

*Twenty-line measurement of gothic font used for Furioso text: G60. Type-page: 128 (134) x 89 (95) mm (D2r), 2 coll. x 5 stanzas. Catchwords: on leaf 8. Running Title: [verso] CANTO I PRIMO – XLVI. ET VLTIMO [recto] (A2v – 2H4r). The italic font used to print the two dedicatory letters on A1v and 2H4v lacks its own set of capitals; roman capitals are used instead. In the *Furioso**

text, roman caps are often used in place of gothic caps, which were evidently in short supply; the gothic font also lacks accented sorts, and the printers often resorted to the italic letters *ò* and *è* to remedy this deficiency. The type initials at the head of the cantos have an average height of 5 mm. *Twenty-line measurements*: I59 (dedicatory letters on A1v and 2H4v); G60 ("Apologia"); this same gothic font is used to print the *Furioso*, the other paratexts at the end of the book, the catchwords, and the signatures of all gatherings except 2K, where roman capitals are used.

## NOTES

1. *Leaf Height*. 157 mm (Bibl. Nazionale Centrale, Firenze/Nencini F.5.4.20, l. P1); 150 mm (Bibl. Nazionale Centrale, Firenze/24.10.357, l. P2); 147 mm (Bibl. Comunale Ariosteia/S.19.6, l. A4).

2. *Fingerprint*. o.co e.e; e;ra egep (3) 1535 (R).

3. *Woodcuts*. Reproductions of the serpents device and the portrait of Ariosto are found in Essling (2.2: 495). On the portrait block, see Mortimer 1.34-35, and Muraro and Rosand 117, fig. 91. Both provide reproductions of the portrait, and Mortimer also includes one of the device, but these are taken from editions of Ariosto's comedies printed by Bindoni and Pasini in 1535. The same blocks were used again for Bindoni and Pasini's 1540 octavo edition of the *Furioso* (see n. 35 in the main article; in that edition, the device appears on the title-page, and the portrait on l. 2K2v). The serpents device on the title-page is based on the original woodcut used in the 1532 edition printed in Ferrara by Francesco Rossi, where it is found on l. h8r; in this edition, the motto has been moved outside the woodcut itself, and the block is a mirror image of the original, a distinguishing trait of blocks which are modelled not on another woodcut, but on the impression it makes on the printed page. Traditionally believed to be Ariosto's answer to his detractors, the block of the 1532 *impresa* was in fact the property of the printer, although the author may have had a hand in creating it (Fahy 111-12). On the biblical sources of the motto "dilexisti malitiam super benignitatem," see Casadei 150-51, which stresses that both this and the "pro bono malum" motto (which in this edition appears on l. 2H4r) express the theme of human ingratitude; he also cites the more recent critical studies devoted to the interpretation of the various devices in early editions of the *Furioso*. The portrait of Ariosto on l. 2K2v is a close copy of the original that appeared on l. h7r of the Rossi edition, the design of which is attributed to Titian. For a discussion of the cuts in the 1532 edition, and the question of their attribution and ownership, see Fahy, *L'Orlando* 16 and 109-12 (he lists extant copies of this edition on 15-31, and reproduces the portrait and the serpents device as Tavv. II and III, respectively); on the portrait alone, see Muraro and Rosand 116-17 and fig. 90.

4. *Privileges*. The question of the status of this and the other editions published after Ariosto's death vis-à-vis the privileges that he had obtained, and that his heirs sought to have transferred to themselves, is still unresolved. The import of the declaration "Hassi la concessione del Senato Veneto per anni diece" on the title-page is, therefore, not clear. In discussing this edition and this declaration, Fahy states: "edizione autorizzata, quindi, e perciò, si è tentati di supporre, anche approvata dagli eredi, ma gli stampatori erano gli stessi Mafeo Pasini e Francesco Bindoni che, nel 1533, avevano approfittato della morte del poeta per far stampare un'edizione certamente non approvata [...] poi si succedettero a Venezia nel 1535 e nei due anni successivi ben sei altre edizioni, che è difficile credere fossero tutte approvate dagli eredi" (106). On the question of privileges, see Fahy 102-107, and the bibliographical references given therein; see also Trovato 68 and 97.

5. *Dating*. This edition, dated simply 1535, was probably printed during or before the month of March – see note 24 in the main article.

## REFERENCES

Agnelli-Ravegnani 41-42; Brunet 1.429; EDIT16 n. 2548; Essling n. 2257; Graesse 1.197; Guidi 25-26; Melzi/Tosi 1838, 122-23; Melzi/Tosi 1865, 40-41; Mortimer n. 27; Muraro 117, fig. 91; Sander 1.97.

## COPIES EXAMINED

Florence, Bibl. Nazionale Centrale (Nencini F.5.4.20, lacking ll. A1, 2K3 and 2K4; 24.10.357, lacking l. 113); Ferrara, Bibl. Comunale Ariostea (S.19.6).

## OTHER COPIES

Vatican City, Bibl. Apostolica Vaticana (Ferraioli V.5467, 16 cm); Naples, Bibl. Universitaria; Vicenza, Bibl. Civica Bertoliana; Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (\*35.H.156).

## NOTES

\* Research on the sixteenth-century editions of the *Furioso* studied in this article was carried out with the support of a Doctoral Fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The following abbreviations have been employed: l.=leaf, ll.=leaves, r=recto, v=verso, n.=number, ns.=numbers.



- 1 On Bindoni and Pasini, who were in effect printer-publishers, see Menis; Ascarelli and Menato 349-50, 360-61; Harris, *Bibliografia* 2.93-94; and Harris, "L'avventura editoriale" 95-96, which includes a list of chivalric titles they published. The partnership was active from 1524 to 1551, and it produced, according to Menis, over 360 editions. Francesco Bindoni was Pasini's step-son: after the death of his father, Alessandro, circa 1522-23, Pasini married the widow. Menis suggests that Pasini was the senior partner, which might explain why only his name appears on the title-page and in the heading of the note to the readers in the 1535 *Furioso* (l. 218r).
- 2 For a general overview of the publishing success enjoyed by the *Orlando Furioso* in the sixteenth century, see Javitch 10-14, and, although dated, Fumagalli 17-56. Over the course of the century, 154 editions of Ariosto's work were printed; this figure refers to the total number of full-text editions in Italian, and it was calculated by Servello using the data in the second edition of volume I of EDIT16, a recent and reliable union catalogue of several hundred Italian libraries. Servello also provides useful tables and graphs illustrating the chronological and geographic distribution of *Furioso* editions to 1600 (17-19). A more detailed statistical survey of these editions is provided by Pace, but her analysis is founded on a considerably less valid empirical base than Servello's, namely the *Annali* of Agnelli and Ravegnani. Designed to provide a single descriptive listing of all editions of Ariosto's works up to the 1920s, the *Annali* remains the only comprehensive bibliography of the subject; it is, however, out-of-date, incomplete, methodologically deficient, and therefore fundamentally unreliable.
- 3 Although the term *paratext* is borrowed from the work of the French narratologist Gérard Genette, I use it in a restricted sense, as Javitch does, to refer to all those textual elements of an edition other than the poem itself: critical commentaries, glossaries, letters to the reader, indices, dedications, etc. For Genette's notion of the term, see *Paratexts*.
- 4 An analysis of these paratexts as they relate to the *Furioso*'s critical reception is beyond the purpose of this article. On Dolce and his work for this edition, see notes 18 and 19 below.
- 5 My work on this edition is part of a larger bibliographical project on the publishing history of the *Furioso* in the first half of the Cinquecento. My research, in which direct examination of extant copies is used to validate and supplement the data provided by catalogues such as EDIT16, NUC, and BLC, has thus far established that 23 editions of the *Furioso* were printed during the period 1516-35. I have indicated below in notes 12 and 35 the location and shelf number of the copies of the Bindoni and Pasini editions I have examined. For the location of copies of the other editions, I refer the reader to the aforementioned catalogues; when any of these editions are discussed in the article I have, however, provided the relative EDIT16 entry number. In the following provisional short list, editions are listed chronologically, and the edition number is followed by the place of publication, the publisher/printer, the date, and the format (4°=quarto, 8°=octavo); information in square brackets is derived not from imprint or colophon, but from other evidence. I thank Prof. Randall McLeod of the University of Toronto for the generous assistance he offered by examining copies of a number of these editions held by the British Library. (1) Ferrara, Giovanni Mazzocchi, 22.IV.1516, 4°. (2) Ferrara, Giambattista da La Pigna, 13.II.1521, 4°. (3) Milan, Giovanni Giacomo e fratelli da Legnano / Agostino da Vimercate, 22.IV.1524, 4°. (4) Venice, Nicolò Zoppino / Vincenzo Polo, 20.VIII.1524, 4°. (5) [Venice, Giovanni Francesco e Giovanni Antonio Rusconi], 1524, 4°. (6) Venice, Francesco Bindoni e Maffeo Pasini, IX.1525, 8°. (7) [Venice], III.1526, 4°. (8) Milan, Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler, 30.V.1526, 4°. (9) Venice, Sisto Libbraro, 31.VIII.1526, 8°. (10) Venice, Elisabetta Rusconi, 27.VI.1527, 4°. (11) Venice, Nicolò Garanta e Francesco da Salò / Giovanni Antonio Nicolini Da Sabbio e fratelli, 1527, 8°. (12) Florence, 25.VII.1528, 4°. (13) Venice, Giovanni Matteo Rizzo / Girolamo Pencio di Lecco, 13.III.1530, 8°. (14) Venice, Francesco Bindoni e Maffeo Pasini, III.1530, 8°. (15) Venice, Melchiorre Sessa, 12.IX.1530, 4°. (16) Venice, Nicolò Zoppino, XI.1530, 4°. (17) Venice, Francesco Bindoni e Maffeo Pasini, I.1531, 4°. (18) Ferrara, Francesco Rossi da Valenza, I.X.1532, 4°. (19) Venice, Francesco Bindoni e Maffeo Pasini, VIII.1533, 8°. (20) Venice, Melchiorre Sessa, 10.IX.1533, 4°. (21) Rome, Antonio Blado, 1533, 4°. (22) Venice, Alvise Torti, 21.III.1535, 4°. (23) Venice, Francesco Bindoni e Maffeo Pasini, 1535, 8°.

- 6 Of the six octavo editions that appeared during the period in question, three were printed in gothic letter (Bindoni and Pasini, 1525; Sisto Libbraro, 1526, Bindoni and Pasini 1535), two in italic (Garanta, 1527; Bindoni and Pasini 1530), and one in roman (Rizzo, 1530). The Garanta octavo was part of that publisher's attempt to apply the Aldine model for printing the classics – octavo format and italic font – to chivalric literature (see Harris, "Nicolò Garanta," esp. 106); Bindoni and Pasini, in imitating Garanta's use of italic in their 1530 edition, were probably testing the viability of the typeface on the market. Italic, however, was not successful at this point in the formal evolution of the *Furioso*, and it was not seen again in any format until the Gabriele Giolito quarto edition of 1542 (EDIT16, n. 2594). Evidently, the reading public was not yet ready to see Ariosto's poem presented in the same manner as the classics had been by Aldus. Similarly, Rizzo's use of roman was a premature innovation – no other octavo appeared in this font until Giolito's of 1543 (EDIT16 n. 2598).
- 7 The complex question of the connection between the form and function of books in the Renaissance is a common theme of the scholarship on early book history; for a summary of the subject as it pertains to Italy, see Petrucci, and Grendler, who also provides statistics on literacy; the question of readership is amply treated by Hirsch 125-53; Quondam, "La letteratura," examines these issues at several points; the basic lines of the question were drawn by Febvre and Martin (77-108).
- 8 The larger folio format was used to print works of law, theology, and, less frequently, literature; these volumes were usually in Latin and, for the first two subjects, in gothic letter, and they were intended mostly for scholars. The *Furioso* was never printed in folio during the period under consideration here.
- 9 There is still no comprehensive study of the printing types used in Italy during the Cinquecento. For the various styles and the terminology used to classify them, see Carter 45-91, esp. 79 and 89 for the uses of roman and gothic; see also Dowding 3-58, and Johnson; Balsamo and Tinto's study covers the development of italic; for a general survey, see Goldschmidt 1-26, and Updike 125-32, 159-63. It should be noted that the gothic faces employed in the editions of the *Furioso* treated here, including the 1535 octavo, are all examples of gothic rotundas, a rounder form prevalent in Italy in the sixteenth century.
- 10 Another important exception were Aldus' editions of the classics for the humanist market, printed in octavo with italic letter. For examples of chivalric titles in both categories, see Cutolo, Essling, and Sander.
- 11 For the two reading publics of chivalric literature, and the typographic typology pertinent to each, see Beer 208-10 and 235-46.
- 12 I have examined the following copies of these editions, listed here with their shelf numbers; I also list, in parentheses, other extant copies. 1525: Milan, Bibl. Nazionale Braidense, Rari Castiglioni 92 (Chantilly, Oise, Cabinet des livres, Musée Condé, III.D.59). 1530: Vatican City, Bibl. Apostolica Vaticana, Ferraioli V.5466; Cambridge, Mass., Houghton Library, Harvard Univ., \*IC5.Ar434.516o.1530c (London, British Library, G. 10971; Pistoia, Bibl. Comunale Forteguerriana; Trento, Bibl. Comunale). 1531: Ferrara, Bibl. Comunale Ariosteana, S.16.1.4 (London, British Library, G. 11067; Venice, Bibl. Nazionale Marciana). 1533: Ferrara, Bibl. Comunale Ariosteana, S.16.1.12; Cambridge, Mass., Houghton Library, Harvard Univ., \*IC5.Ar434.516o.1533 (London, British Library, G. 10972).
- 13 The 1525 and 1533 octavo editions were both printed in gothic, and the 1531 quarto was printed in roman. As explained above in n. 6, the 1530 edition in italic was printed in imitation of Garanta's octavo of 1527, and therefore it cannot be considered innovative. It could be argued that the 1525 octavo, which was the first *Furioso* printed in that format, constitutes an innovation, but this edition, an octavo in gothic types, follows a typical typographic model of the period for chivalric texts.
- 14 On these illustrations, see the Woodcuts section of the Appendix. Blado's 1533 *Furioso* uses close copies of the 1532 portrait block and serpents device (l. h7r and l. h8r, respectively); tavola XXII in Agnelli and Ravegnani reproduces the latter block. On Blado's edition, see Fahy, *L'Orlando* 189-91. Another copy of the Ferrara portrait block was used by Torti on the

title-page of his 1535 *Furioso* (see reproductions in Essling 2.2: 495, and Agnelli and Ravegnani, *tavola* XXIII). It is possible that this edition, dated 21 March 1535, precedes Bindoni and Pasini's octavo, dated simply 1535, but not likely; see n. 25. An entirely different portrait of Ariosto had been used by Zoppino on the title-page of his 1530 edition (EDIT16 n. 2529; the title-page is reproduced in Essling 2.2: 491, and in Agnelli and Ravegnani, *tavola* XVIII). Bindoni and Pasini used a close copy of the Zoppino block on the title-page of their 1531 quarto and on l. 2H4v of their 1533 octavo. By 1535, therefore, the practice of printing the *Furioso* with the author's image was common, and they were simply following an established convention. Their placement of the serpents device on the title-page was, however, unprecedented.

- 15 Single paratexts, all brief, had appeared in several editions published before 1535. Bindoni and Pasini, for example, had printed a laudatory sonnet by Gian Battista Dragoncino in their 1525 and 1530 editions (l. A1 in both cases), and a letter to the reader in their 1531 quarto (l. A1v). This letter was an abbreviated version of the one published in the Zoppino edition of the previous year (also on l. A1v).
- 16 See Richardson 28-108 for an overview of the various kinds of paratexts (commentaries, biographies, indices) included in editions of the *Decameron*, *Canzoniere*, *Trionfi*, *Commedia*, and other vernacular texts printed in Italy, particularly in Venice and Florence, from the late fifteenth century to the early 1540s. On the printing history of the *Commedia* and its commentaries in the Renaissance see Parker 130-51.
- 17 Richardson 90-91. Editors also prepared the texts for publication, carrying out corrections and revisions to render them accessible to the widest possible readership. For their aims and methods, their function in the Venetian publishing world, and their influence on reading habits, see Richardson, and specifically 90-108 for the period 1531 to 1545; see also Trovato. For a more detailed discussion of the development of the publishing industry in Italy in the sixteenth century, see Santoro, *Storia del libro italiano* 71-136; Santoro's approach integrates economic and cultural considerations, including the growth of literacy, and he also provides statistics on total book production. Quondam, "La letteratura" covers the same issues, but from the perspective of literary history; for an overview of the effect that the rise in the numbers of readers had on the book market, see Bottasso; on the expansion of the book market in Venice, see Pesenti 93-100.
- 18 Dolce was active from 1532 until his death in 1568, authoring, translating or editing 358 editions (Di Filippo Bareggi 58). On Dolce, his work for Venetian publishers, and the cultural milieu in which he operated, see Terpening, Di Filippo Bareggi, esp. 58-60, and Trovato 67-71.
- 19 Dolce's paratexts have been given only cursory attention: see Fumagalli 25-26; Fatini 8-9; Servello 24; Trovato 29, 68, 202-203; and Richardson 95-97. On the "Apologia" alone, see Binni 11; Ramat, *La critica ariostesca* 14-15; Ramat, "Lodovico Ariosto" 364; Beer 209; Javitch 171-72. Terpening 27-29 discusses the "Apologia" printed in the 1540 edition by Bindoni and Pasini (see n. 35 below); the text there follows closely the 1535 original. Hempfer comments on the "Apologia" at various points, see esp. 69-70, 143-44, 277-78, and 289. Dolce's revision of the text lies outside the scope of this article; Trovato examines his general editorial practice over the course of chapters 8-11 (191-297); in discussing the 1535 *Furioso*, he affirms that "L'edizione [...] era davvero molto corretta, almeno sul piano ortografico" (202), and provides some examples of Dolce's revisions (222-24); see also Richardson 95-97.
- 20 In transcriptions, abbreviations have been expanded, words separated, and the letters u/v regularized, but capitalization, accentuation, and punctuation have not been changed.
- 21 See Trovato 19-29 for the practice, common among fifteenth and sixteenth-century Italian publishers, of using title-pages, colophons, and dedications to promote the quality of the corrected text and the presence of *giunte* in their books, as well as to announce books in preparation and to make favourable comparisons between the printer's titles and those of his competitors.
- 22 I follow Richardson's translation of "piu commodo" in the passage cited: "In his dedication Dolce said that he had now made the *Furioso* 'easier to use' ('più commodo'); as he explained



in his *Apologia*, he had added, at Pasini's request, notes on words which were somewhat obscure because they were only rarely accepted by common usage [...] (96); see below for discussion of the "Dechiaratione."

- 23 The salient points developed by Dolce in the "Apologia" are summarized in Fatini 8-9, and Ramat, *La critica ariostesca* 14-15; see n. 19 above for a list of the brief critical treatments of this text.
- 24 As stated above, a detailed analysis of the "Apologia" and its place in the early critical reception of the *Furioso* is not my purpose here, but some general comments should nevertheless be made. Javitch observes that the "one early defense of the poem that was not provoked by neo-Aristotelian criticism was the very first, Lodovico Dolce's 'Apologia'" (171). This is not surprising since "it was not until the 1540s that Aristotle's treatise really began to be valued and assimilated by Italian literati" (Javitch 16; on this point see also Turolla 132). Dolce does draw on Horatian poetics, and he makes several references to Horace and the *Ars Poetica* to lend authority to his argument: in exalting Ariosto's poetic virtues, for example, he affirms that "Egli giòva e diletta parimente" (l. 215v). It must be remembered that in 1535 Bindoni and Pasini also published Dolce's Italian translation of the *Ars Poetica*; on this octavo edition, see Weinberg 1.101-2 (in his bibliography Weinberg lists *La Poetica D'Horatio Tradotta per Messer Lodovico Dolce*. In Vinegia per Francesco Bindoni, & Mapheo Pasini compagni. Del mese di Agosto. MDXXXV). On the reception of Horace's text and Aristotle's *Poetics* in the Renaissance, and on their fusion, see the first volume of Weinberg. Finally, it is worth noting that the various comparisons that Dolce draws between Ariosto and Virgil are significant in that they represent the beginning of that process of canonization, described by Javitch, which the *Furioso* underwent in later decades, a process founded upon the affiliation of the poem to the epics of antiquity – Dolce explicitly claims that Ariosto is "un Poeta Magnifico, colto, & elegante; e degno d'esser apposto all'antichità" (l. 215v); on this point, see also Richardson 95.
- 25 Dolce edited four editions of Ariosto's minor works for Bindoni and Pasini in 1535, which I list here with relevant data, indicating the copies I examined parenthetically:
  - (1) *Il Negromante*, 4°; dedicatory letter, ll. A1v –A2r: "AL DIVINO SIGNORE, MESSER PIETRO ARETINO, LODOVICO DOLCIO. Empio veramente e del mondo e di se stesso nemico [...]"; colophon, l. 13v: "il Mese di Marzo M. D. XXXV."; (EDIT16 n. 2544; Milan, Bibl. Trivulziana, H.1254).
  - (2) *Il Negromante*, 8°; dedicatory letter, ll. A2r –A3.; same heading and text as (1); colophon, l. E8r: "Mazo M.D.XXXV"; (EDIT16 n. 2545; Bologna, Bibl. Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Landoni 2139).
  - (3) *La Lena*, 8° dedicatory letter, different from letter in (1) and (2), ll. A1v –A2r: "AL DIVINO SIGNORE MESSER PIETRO ARETINO LODOVICO DOLCIO. La perversa malignità d'alcuni [...]"; colophon, l. E4r: "Il Mese di Maggio" 1535; (EDIT16 n. 2541; Ferrara, Bibl. Comunale Ariostea, S.16.2.44).
  - (4) *Le Satire*, 8°; title-page, l. A1r: "Del mese di Iuglio. MDXXXV"; (EDIT16, n. 2552; Vatican City, Bibl. Apostolica Vaticana, Stamp. Ross. 6647).
 If Dolce's comment in the "Apologia" regarding Ariosto's comedies is interpreted as a reference to their imminent publication by Bindoni and Pasini, then the date given in both *Negromante* editions, March 1535, would indicate that their *Furioso*, which bears only the year 1535, was published either before March, or in March but before the two editions of the comedy. On these editions of the comedies and satires, see Trovato 68 and 97.
- 26 The two comedies are probably *Il Marescalco* and *Cortigiana*. In addition to the *Angelica*, Dolce makes references to *I sette salmi*, *La Passione di Gesù*, and *I tre libri de la Humanità di Christo*. For the editions of these titles printed in 1534 and 1535 see EDIT16 ns. 2328-2342; see also Quondam, "Aretino."
- 27 The dedicatory of *La Lena* mentions only one of Aretino's works: "i tre libri dell'humanità di Christo usciti dalla profondità del vostro ingegno" (l. A2r).
- 28 Bindoni and Pasini do not figure in the list of Aretino editions compiled by Quondam ("Aretino" 222-30; see also 213-15). Quondam based his "Repertorio" on the relative entries



- in EDIT16, which he integrated with data from other catalogues and from critical editions. He emphasizes that there still exists no reliable bibliography of Aretino editions, and that his list is designed as a provisional research tool for scholars studying the complex publishing history of Aretino's works (197-98). Many of the editions in this list lack a publisher's or printer's name, which leaves open the possibility that Bindoni and Pasini might have produced a number of them; there is no evidence to support such a possibility, but if any were to surface, the reasons for Dolce's references to Aretino's works would be clearer.
- 29 For Dolce's relationship with Aretino, see, for example, Di Filippo Bareggi and Terpening 16-18 and 188-89.
  - 30 The translation is Richardson's (96). His comments on this paratext are cogent: "Dolce's 'Dechiaratione' is only two and a half pages long. Its main purpose (apart from elucidating three references to classical proper names) was to give synonyms for uncommon words or phrases. But Dolce was as concerned with justifying Ariosto's usage as he was with explaining it, for with only one exception he gave quotations of the same terms in Dante, Petrarch, or Boccaccio. One can see that his purpose here was not only to assist readers but to carry on from the *Apologia* his defence of Ariosto as fundamentally a 'good observer' ('buono osservatore') of the rules of vernacular grammar who had nevertheless used with discretion the licence, which all poets should have, to deviate from past usage" (96). Dolce makes this last point in one of the glosses: "Strilla, invece di strida, non è appresso alcuno Autore, ma diasi alla licentia del Poeta" (l. 217r). The "Dechiaratione" is made up of twenty-five entries, each referring to the relevant passage in the *Furioso* by leaf (i.e., "c." for "carta"). As Richardson notes, three are glosses of classical names; two of these are cited as part of similes ("Come quel figlio di VULCAN" and "Quale il canuto EGEO," (l. 217r)), which explains Dolce's use of the term "comparationi" in the passage cited from the "Apologia" (l. 216r). The others are glosses of difficult words, for example: "c. 8 Vanni, le penne maestre, cioè l'ali. Il Petrarca nei Triomphi. Sì, ch'al suo volo l'ira adoppi i vanni"; "c. 47 Brulla, priva, ignuda. Dante nell'Infer Canto. XXXIII. Rimanea della pelle tutta brulla" (216v).
  - 31 As stated in n. 1 above, Pasini seems to have been the senior partner in the business, and as such he would have been directly responsible for editorial decisions regarding format and paratexts.
  - 32 This paratext lists, in seventeen lines of type on l. 218r, nine *giunte* "per annotatione di numero, di Canti, e di carte," as its title specifies. For example: "Nel Canto nono a carte. 34. Incomincia la prima giunta; e segue fin nel decimo a carte. 41. Ricomincia la seconda nel Canto undecimo a carte. 46. e continua per infino nel duodecimo a carte. 50." (l. 218r)
  - 33 In the "Tavola," which takes up three pages (ll. 218v-2K1v), the characters' names are listed alphabetically, though strict alphabetical order is not respected under each letter, and the references to the *Furioso* are by leaf number: "Lucina Novella a carte 75. / Lidia Novella a carte 174. / Leone a carte 230. 233. 238." (l. 2K1r)
  - 34 The titles give specific instructions to ensure that readers know how to use the indices in combination with the marginal notations: "Tavola delle Historie e Novelle contenute di tutta l'Opera per ordine di alphabeto & per annotatione di numeri di carte: i quali numeri dimostrano con facilità il principiar e continuar di quelle. e pongasi mente, che sempre trovarassi posto in margine il nome di quello, che si vorrà leggere" (l. 218v); "Breve modo di trovar tutti i luoghi dall'Autore aggiunti per annotatione di numero, di Canti, e di carte. E sempre dove sarà aggiunto, troverasse notato in margine Novo, e continuera detta aggiunta fin al loco, dove si trovera notato fuora in margine, Vecchio" (l. 218r). For example, the "Tavola"'s entry for "Rinaldo" gives leaf 2 as the first reference, and on the second leaf of the book (A2v) the character's name is printed in the left-hand margin, beside stanza 10 of canto 1, which describes his first appearance. The use of marginal notations "si diffonderà nei libri in volgare verso la metà del secolo" (Trovato 45, n. 30).
  - 35 These editions, all printed in Venice with the probable exception of the last one, are the following; the EDIT16 entry number is given in parentheses with the location and shelf number of the copy or copies I examined. (1) Alvise Torti, IX.1536 (EDIT16 n. 2559;

- Ferrara, Bibl. Comunale Ariostea, E.2.26). (2) Giovanni Giolito De' Ferrari / Agostino Bindoni, 1536 (EDIT16 n. 2558; Bologna, Bibl. Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, 10.XX.IV.36; Cambridge, Mass., Houghton Library, Harvard Univ., \*IC5.Ar434.516o.1536e; Venice, Bibl. della Fondazione Cini, 0159). (3) Agostino Bindoni, 1539 (EDIT16 n. 2578; Cambridge, Mass., Houghton Library, Harvard Univ., \*IC5.Ar434.516o.1539c). (4) Alvise Torti, IV.1539. (EDIT16 n. 2580; Cambridge, Mass., Houghton Library, Harvard Univ., \*IC5.Ar434.516o.1539). (5) Bindoni and Pasini, 1540 (EDIT16 n. 2582; Ferrara, Bibl. Comunale Ariostea, C.3.32; Cambridge, Mass., Houghton Library, Harvard Univ., \*IC5.Ar434.516o.1540. Other extant copies: London, British Library, G. 10976 and 1073.f.32; Madrid, Bibl. Palacio; Milan, Bibl. Trivulziana; Piacenza, Bibl. Comunale Passerini Landi; Pisa, Bibl. dell'Università; Reggio Emilia, Bibl. Municipale Antonio Panizzi). (6) Giovanni Antonio Volpini, VIII.1541. (EDIT16 n. 2586; Venice, Bibl. della Fondazione Cini, 0169). (7) [Roma, Antonio Blado, post-1540] (EDIT16 n. 2550; Vatican City, Bibl. Apostolica Vaticana, Ross. 6719). This edition was first reported in the revised version of Volume 1 (A) of EDIT16, published in 1990. BAV/Ross. 6719 is the only extant copy, and it lacks both a date and a printer's name: the title-page does not include an imprint, and the colophon was either on the last leaf, which is lacking, or it was not printed at all. An attempt to identify the printer and to date the edition was made by Servello, and is reported in her article "Ancora un *Orlando Furioso*"; she dates the edition between 1535 and 1542, but does not propose a printer. My own examination of BAV/Ross. 6719 leads me to propose Antonio Blado as the printer, and to shift the *terminus post quem* for publication to 1540. This attribution and dating are based on a comparison of the paratexts in editions of the *Furioso* printed in the 1530s and early 1540s (along the lines of Servello's analysis), and a comparison of the woodcuts and types in this copy to those in Blado's 1543 quarto edition of the *Furioso*, a copy of which is in the same collection at the Vatican (BAV/Ross. 4629). Both the attribution and the dating remain at this point only probable, but upon further research I hope to publish conclusive findings.
- 36 The octavo published by Bindoni and Pasini in 1540 followed their 1535 edition very closely.
- 37 The 1542 quarto (EDIT16 n. 2594) and the 1543 octavo (EDIT16 n. 2598) were the first of a long series of *Furioso* editions printed regularly by Giolito until 1560; their formal presentation was adopted by most other printers. On Giolito see, for example, Quondam, "'Mercanzia d'onore' / 'Mercanzia d'utile,'" and, specifically on his editions of the *Furioso*, Javitch 31-36. Bindoni and Pasini tried to compete with Giolito by printing a quarto and an octavo in 1542, after the appearance of his edition (EDIT16 ns. 2592 and 2593). These included paratexts that were more recent than those in their 1535 octavo, but the editions themselves presented the same typographical appearance; evidently, they were not successful, for the press, though active until 1551, never printed the *Furioso* again; on these editions, see Richardson 97 and 217-18; Javitch 49-50.
- 38 For a clear and concise overview of the theoretical issues raised here about the materiality of texts in the context of historical bibliography, publishing history, and literary theory, see Parker's introduction to her chapter "Material Production and Interpretations of the *Comedy*" (124-30); Parker focusses on the work of Christian Bec, Quondam, Donald McKenzie, and Jerome McGann.

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## “Uno sarà il fine”:

# Tasso's Domestication of Allegory

Probably sometime in the early-to-mid 1560s, Torquato Tasso wrote a series of discourses on epic poetry, the *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*.<sup>1</sup> In June of 1575, he wrote a letter to Luca Scalabrino in which he indicated his intention to include these *Discorsi* as a preface to his nearly completed poem – the *Gerusalemme Liberata* – with the hope that they “prevengano l'offese, e facciano alcuna buona impressione ne l'opinione degli uomini; perché so molto bene quanto possa la prima impressione” (88-89). When the first version of the poem over which Tasso had some editorial control appeared in 1581, however, the *Discorsi* had been replaced by a brief treatise: the “Allegoria del Poema,” which he had written as he was completing the poem, probably in late 1575 and early 1576.<sup>2</sup> Despite the fact that Tasso privileged this allegorical account of the poem, it has, until relatively recently, occupied a marginal place in the Tasso canon.<sup>3</sup>

The reasons for this traditional marginalization are not hard to discern. Primary among them is Tasso's own confession that when he began his poem he had no thought of allegory, since it seemed to him a “soverchia e vana fatica,” and that he only began to consider an allegorical reading midway in his writing due to “la strettezza de' tempi” (*Lettere*, 192-93). Taking Tasso at his word, then, critics have often viewed the “Allegoria” as a late and unfortunate imposition on an Aristotelian epic, which was motivated by his fear of Counter-Reformation censorship. And even with more recent attempts to take the “Allegoria” seriously, critics often contrast Tasso's Aristotelianism, as revealed in the early *Discorsi*, with his later allegorical understanding of the poem; thus, Tasso's move toward allegory represents a radical shift towards a discourse alien to the original conception of the epic.<sup>4</sup> This view no doubt receives further reinforcement from our post-Romantic antipathy to allegory in favor of the more “organic” symbol, a view still widely held despite post-modernist attempts to undercut the perceived difference between the two.<sup>5</sup> In this essay, I will argue that the movement away from the early *Discorsi* towards the “Allegoria” constitutes a shift that is much less extreme than it first appears.

Many critics have suggested that Tasso's *Discorsi dell'arte poetica* are key to understanding Tasso's epic,<sup>6</sup> and it is often noted that Aristotle is the pre-

dominant influence on these early discourses, a statement that proves at best half true. Stephen Halliwell has observed that sixteenth-century Italy did not turn "the *Poetics* easily or automatically into an unquestioned source of doctrinal orthodoxy," despite the fact that it was often quoted as an authority ("The *Poetics* and its Interpreters," 413). As Guido Baldassarri has argued, it was difficult for Tasso or any other sixteenth-century literary theorist to look to Aristotle as an unquestioned authority on epic simply because *The Poetics* actually contains very little discussion of epic poetry. What it does contain is located primarily in two chapters (23 and 24) near the end of the treatise. And as many scholars have noted, Aristotle's definition and treatment of epic derives largely from his consideration of tragedy, the genre he preferred.<sup>7</sup> Thus for many *cinquecento* theorists, the task was not to reiterate Aristotelian orthodoxies, but rather to flesh out Aristotle's definition and treatment of epic in order to formulate a coherent definition of the genre.<sup>8</sup> Part of this process of extrapolation involved mining the discussions of epic in other ancient authors, most notably Horace, but part also derived from poetic self-interest. Many of the prominent critics in the *cinquecento* were also practicing poets who wrote theoretical works to justify their own poems, and in many ways Tasso's own critical writings illustrate this impulse toward self-authorization.<sup>9</sup> In addition, Tasso's theory arose to a considerable degree as response to the success of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and the romance theorists who attempted to legitimate Ariosto's achievement (and their poetic productions) by arguing for the validity of romance as a genre.<sup>10</sup>

Ultimately, then, while Tasso repeatedly appeals to Aristotle as an authority in his critical writings, his theory of epic draws on a variety of sources and responds to a number of different concerns; the result is a theory that possesses a greater degree of originality than is commonly acknowledged. I wish to argue here that his critical writings reveal a rhetorical conception of literature; Tasso designs his theory and his poem to create a moral response in his readers, and thus his treatment of characterization and unity of plot aims to move the readers appropriately to create a rhetorically effective poem.<sup>11</sup>

In the first discourse, for example, Tasso discusses the choice of an epic subject matter, a choice of primary importance, since the subject will determine the way in which readers respond to the poem. Tasso insists that the subject be taken from history:

Ma molto meglio è, a mio giudicio, che da l'istoria si prenda: perché dovendo l'epico cercare in ogni parte il verisimile (presupongo questo, come principio notissimo), non è verisimile ch'una azione illustre, quali sono quelle del poema eroico, non sia stata scritta e passata a la memoria de' posterì con l'aiuto d'alcuna istoria. I successi grandi non possono esser incogniti; e ove non siano ricevuti in iscrittura, da questo solo argomento gli uomini la loro falsità; e falsi stimandoli, non consentono così facilmente d'essere or mossi ad ira, or a terrore, or a pietà; d'esser or allegrati, or contristati, or

sospesi, or rapiti; ed in somma non attendono con quella espettazione e con quel diletto i successi delle cose, come farebbono se que' medesimi successi, o in tutto o in parte, veri stimassero.

Per questo, dovendo il poeta *con la sembianza della verità ingannare i lettori*, e non solo persuader loro che le cose da lui trattate sian vere, ma sottoporle in guisa a i lor sensi che credano non di leggerle ma di esser presenti e di vederle e di udirle è necessitato di guadagnarsi nell'animo loro questa opinion di verità, il che facilmente con l'autorità dell'istoria gli verrà fatto. (1.5; emphasis mine)

Tasso's verisimilitude is a rhetorical concept, as it is primarily concerned with the response of the reader; the poet must write something his reader will believe, his subject must be one that the reader *deems* true. The appeal to history (in opposition to Aristotle's distinction between history and poetry in chapter 9 of *The Poetics*) similarly derives not from a concern for historical truth, but from consideration for the reader's response to the subject.<sup>12</sup> Since it seems unlikely that an illustrious action would go unrecorded, it is difficult to convince readers of the truth of a heroic action unknown to history. To produce a believable narrative, therefore, the poet must look to history. We should see no contradiction in Tasso's insistence on both a historically true subject and the poet's freedom to embellish that subject; the issue here is not truth but authority and believability. Once a subject has been *accepted* as true by the reader, the poet can feel free to embroider it, because the perception of truth will survive the poet's "corrections" of history. The unhistorical subject must be rejected not because it is false, but because it will not produce the desired response in the readers, who will dismiss it as so much fiction. The poet's aim, according to Tasso, is to *deceive* ("ingannare") his readers into believing that they witness the truth. This concern with reader response remains Tasso's preeminent concern throughout the discourses; like a good rhetorician, he gauges the effects each word will have on his intended audience.

Tasso does not address the question of why the verisimilitude (in this rhetorical sense) of the subject is so crucial beyond stating that "presupongo questo, come principio notissimo." He does, however, hint at an explanation later in the first discourse, when he begins to discuss epic's relationship to tragedy. In one of his divergences from Aristotle, Tasso holds that tragic and epic actions are dissimilar. The reason for their dissimilarity is telling: they have different effects on their readers. "Se le azioni epiche e tragiche fossero della istessa natura, produrrebbono gl'istessi effetti; però che da le medesime cagioni derivano gli effetti medesimi; ma non producendo i medesimi effetti, ne seguita che diversa sia la natura loro" (1.13). Tragedy produces, as Aristotle also noted, pity and fear ("l'orrore e la compassione"), emotions derived from witnessing the actions of characters of moderate virtue ("d'una condizion di mezzo"). The characters of heroic poetry, however, represent the greatest extremes of virtue and vice:

l'epico, a l'incontro, vuole nelle persone il sommo delle virtù, le quali eroiche da la virtù eroica sono nominate. Si ritrova in Enea l'eccellenza della pietà; della fortezza militare in Achille; della prudenza in Ulisse [...]. Ricevano ancora gli epici non solo il colmo della virtù, ma l'eccesso del vizio con minor pericolo assai che i tragici non sono usi di fare. (1.14-15)

Epic heroes, in other words, are exemplary. The great heroes of Homer and Virgil are epic because each exemplifies the archetype of a certain virtue or vice.

Tasso further insists on the exemplary nature of epic characters in his later discourses, the greatly expanded *Discorsi del poema eroico*. In the third discourse, he expands the discussion found in the earlier *Discorsi* by drawing on Renaissance, Medieval, and Classical critics to make the claim that one of epic poetry's functions is to praise virtue and blame vice: "Laonde errò senza dubbio Castelvetro quando egli disse che al poeta eroico non si conveniva il lodare, perciò che se il poeta eroico celebra la virtù eroica dee inalarla con le lodi sino al cielo [...]. Ultimamente s'a l'istorico è lecito a lodare [...] molto più dovrebbe esser lecito al poeta" (2.254-55). Epic poets must ultimately serve as guides to the paths of virtue, and they will accomplish this, it seems, by praising the virtue and blaming the vice of exemplary heroes. Tasso goes on to criticize Homer for his portrayal of Achilles, who fails the test of exemplary decorum because, while he is a great warrior, he is also avaricious and cruel in his failure to restore Hector's body to the Trojans for the proper burial rites. Virgil, however, creates a superior protagonist in Aeneas, who demonstrates greater decorum and exemplifies fully the virtues of "la pietà, la religione, la continenza, la fortezza, la magnanimità, la giustizia e ciascun'altra virtù di cavaliere" (2.262-63). In the later *Discorsi*, then, Tasso makes explicit his earlier concern with exemplary epic heroes; his criticisms of heroes such as Achilles are leveled for moral reasons, while he praises Aeneas as an exemplar of virtue and decorum and hence worthy to be the protagonist in an epic poem. And while Tasso's earlier discourses are not as explicit in their advocacy of a rhetorical function for his heroes, his insistence on their exemplary nature and his linking of that exemplary nature to the effect of the poem on the reader implicitly call for such a reading. We should also recall here that Tasso's insistence on a poetry of praise and blame was a critical commonplace in his day and was often specifically applied to epic poetry.<sup>13</sup>

In the second discourse of the early *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*, Tasso continues to reveal his underlying preoccupation with the effect of the poem on its readers. While in the first discourse he argued for the necessity of a subject taken from history, in this second discourse he emphasizes the poet's freedom of invention which allows him both to demonstrate his mastery of the poetic art and to make his historical subject more fit for epic. Tasso begins his discourse by repeating Aristotle's observation (in chapter 9 of *The Poetics*) that poetry



differs from history in that it considers things "non come sono state, ma in quella guisa che dovrebbero essere state."<sup>14</sup> The poet then adjusts history accordingly: "e tutti i successi che si fatti troverà, cioè che meglio in un altro modo potessero essere avvenuti, senza rispetto alcuno di vero o d'istoria a sua voglia muti e rimuti, e riduca gli accidenti delle cose a quel modo ch'egli giudica migliore, co 'l vero alterato il tutto finto accompagnando" (1.20). The poet should nevertheless take care not to alter the essential truth of his historical subject, as this will deprive poetry of the authority that comes from history. The poet's task is not to change history simply for his own pleasure; he must, rather, change it so as to raise the limited particulars of history to a universal level. Historical reality is characterized by "accidenti"; the poet alters his subject so as to eliminate the accidental and make all events in the poem causally related. Tasso is not only interested in poetic structure for its own sake, but, given the rhetorical context established by the first discourse, his conception of causality and probability is also infused with moral significance. By remaking certain events of his historical subject, Tasso argues that he is able to free it from the particular limitations of history and create a *moral* causality in his plot that renders it universal. Immediately before discussing the importance of unity in the plot, he summarizes the steps the epic poet must take in order to make his subject universal: "Or poiché avrà il poeta ridotto il vero ed i particolari dell'istoria al verisimile ed a l'universale [...]" (1.22).

Tasso was not alone in arguing that the historical subject required correction before it was fit for poetry. Giraldis Cinzio, for example, expresses a similar view in his *Discorso intorno al comporre dei romanzi*. Although on the one hand he argues a thesis contrary to Tasso's, namely that a romance constitutes a legitimate genre distinct from epic, on the other hand Giraldis Cinzio believed as did Tasso that the end or *telos* of poetry was the improvement of men's lives and that poetry best accomplished this end by improving on history:

E disse Aristotile che il fine del poeta era indurre buoni costumi negli animi degli uomini; e però pur ch'egli questo fine conseguia con la sua composizione, sia ella di cose false o di cose vere con le finte mescolate, ha egli fatto ciò che a lui si apparteneva. Perché ove l'istorico dee solo scrivere i fatti e le azioni vere e come in effetto sono; il poeta, non quali sono, ma quali esser debbano le mostra ad ammaestramento della vita. (77)

In his own note to this passage, Giraldis Cinzio further delineates his theory of how idealized history improves readers; while perfection does not exist in nature or in humanity, a poet is able to feign perfection in poetry. This feigned perfection, he argues, has a sustained rhetorical effect: "Perché ancora questa perfezione in fatto non si trovi, si può essa non dimeno fingere da ingegno umano e supporre agli occhi altrui, non per dir menzogna ma per accender gli uomini al meglio ed a chiamargli in tal guisa alle azioni degne di loda, aciocché

si avvicininno, quanto più sia possibile, a quella perfezione" (275). For both Tasso and Giraldis Cinzio, then, verisimilitude and necessity require the creation of plot that is not only well constructed and logical in its development, but one that also reveals a moral causality brought about by the poet's correction of the accidents of history.

Later in the second discourse, Tasso argues for the necessity of unity in the epic plot, attempts to demonstrate that romance does not constitute a genre in itself, and asserts that Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* cannot, therefore, be classified as a romance (since the genre does not exist) and must be considered a failed epic. Through all of his discussion of epic unity, Tasso continuously leads the discussion back to a consideration of the reader's experience. In discussing the appropriate size for an epic poem, for instance, he writes: "Grande è convenevolmente quel poema in cui la memoria non si perde né si smarrisce; ma tutto unitamente comprendendolo, può considerare come l'una cosa con l'altra sia connessa e dall'altra dependa, e come le parti fra loro e co'l tutto siano proporzionate" (1.25). The reader's experience of the poem is again the standard by which the epic poet judges his subject; he or she must grasp the causal relation of the poem's events, or the effect of the poem will be lost.

Tasso uses the same criteria to judge the *Orlando Furioso*; Ariosto's poem is too long and contains multiple plots, which pose a danger because they lead to confusion and engender multiple meanings, an effect that Tasso equates with indeterminacy or lack of meaning altogether (he does not seem to distinguish between the two): "Aggiungo che da la moltitudine delle favole nasce l'indeterminazione; e può questo progresso andare in infinito, senza che le sia da l'arte prefisso o circoscritto termine alcuno." Unity of plot, on the other hand, ensures unity of meaning: "s'una sarà la favola, uno sarà il fine; se più e diverse saranno le favole, più e diversi saranno i fini," and multiple ends produce "distrazione nell'animo ed impedimento nell'operare" (1.28). The plot of the poem must be "complete," must have a beginning, middle, and end, because only then will the poem be understandable, only then will the moral causality of the poem's events become clear. Tasso talks of searching for "perfection" in the plot ("Tutta o intiera deve essere la favola perch' in lei la perfezione si ricerca" [1.22]), and some critics tie this concern with Neo-Platonic metaphysics. Andrew Fichter, for example, writes the following: "What is real is also necessarily an integral part of the unity that characterizes divine creation; what the poet would make truthful he must also make whole" (121). But Neo-Platonism is only part of what is at issue here for Tasso. Unity becomes necessary because of rhetorical concerns; the lack of a determinate ending, for example, would be problematic as it would limit the reader's ability to understand the poem. Unity of meaning is not only true to Tasso's conception of the structure of the universe, but it is also necessary if he is to ensure that his epic will have the proper effects on its readers.

Tasso's early *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*, therefore, have a problematic relationship to *The Poetics*. While he appeals to Aristotle's treatise frequently and at various points extrapolates from Aristotle's discussion of epic, at other moments Tasso contradicts the treatise or bends it to serve his own purposes. Even in the second discourse, where structural issues seem paramount, Tasso continuously justifies his theory by appealing to the experience of the reader.<sup>15</sup> His early *Discorsi* present a rhetorical theory of poetry that envisions a successful epic as one able to move its readers in the proper fashion and to a correct end. Tasso's early "Aristotelianism" is compromised, as he works toward a moralistic theory of poetry. The relationship of the early *Discorsi* to Aristotelianism is analogous to the relationship of the later "Allegoria del Poema" to the allegorical tradition; both contradict and at times compromise their authoritative sources, and both do so in the interests of a rhetorically effective poetry. Ultimately, the views of the poetry presented in the two treatises prove similar.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the "Allegoria del Poema" is Tasso's strong emphasis at the beginning of the treatise on the importance of imitation in poetry. He asserts that heroic poetry possesses a dual nature: "d'imitazione e d'allegoria è composta." Through its imitations "alletta a sé gli animi e gli orecchi degli uomini, e maravigliosamente gli diletta; con questa [l'allegoria] nella virtù o nella scienza, o nell'una e nell'altra, gli ammaestra" (301). This explanation of poetic fiction was quite common in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, as writers often appealed to allegory to defend the morality of a fictional literature. These appeals differed from the "Allegoria," however, in that they often characterized the literal sense of fiction as apparently frivolous or even immoral; the immoral husk needed to be stripped away to reveal the kernel of moral truth within.<sup>16</sup> Tasso himself seems to draw on this view at the beginning of the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, when he echoes Lucretius' comparison of poetry to deceitful medicine:

'l vero, condito in molli versi,  
i più schivi allettando ha persuaso.  
Così a l'egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi  
di soavi licor gli orli del vaso:  
succhi amari ingannato intanto ei beve,  
e da l'inganno sua vita riceve. (1.3.3-8)

This tradition of seeing allegory behind a discarded literal sense extended into the late sixteenth century, since, as Robert Montgomery has shown, late Renaissance critics tended to associate allegory only with non-mimetic narratives or portions of narratives and viewed allegory as a mode of reading or narration reserved for specific instances of the fantastic or the marvelous. Tasso departs from the allegorical tradition of discarding the literal sense, however, by emphasizing the importance of the imitative aspect of poetry.

His description of the literal, mimetic aspect of the poem differs strikingly from what we might expect in a treatise claiming allegorical meaning: "l'imitazione riguarda l'azioni dell'uomo, che sono a i sensi esteriori sottoposte; ed intorno ad esse principalmente affaticandosi, cerca di rappresentarle con parole efficaci ed espressive, ed atte a por chiaramente dinanzi a gli occhi corporali le cose rappresentate" (301). Tasso's imitations are not beautiful lies, written to be discarded. Instead, he asserts the importance of poetry's mimetic powers, its ability to represent physical reality vividly (before "*corporeal eyes*"). He makes no suggestion that the poem's narrative needs to be rejected in order to understand the allegory. He continues to affirm, in other words, the centrality of the literal sense even in this allegorical reading; for, according to Tasso, allegory becomes thoroughly intertwined in the literal, verisimilar narrative.<sup>17</sup>

In the "Allegoria," Tasso makes of his poem a figure for the "uomo virile," and he designates each character as a representative of one of the soul's faculties. Goffredo thus represents the "intelletto," while Tancredi and Rinaldo signify "la concupiscibile e l'irascibile virtù." This extended reading of the poem may appear similar to the tradition of reading *The Aeneid* that began in late antiquity and extended into the Renaissance, in which *The Aeneid* is read as an allegorical narrative of human development.<sup>18</sup> A closer consideration of this tradition indicates, however, how widely Tasso's allegory departs from it. In his "Exposition of the Content of Virgil according to Moral Philosophy," for example, Fulgentius explains book one of *The Aeneid* with its narrative of shipwreck "as an allegory of the dangers of birth, which include both the pangs of the mother in giving birth and the hazards of the child in its need to be born" (125). In book four, Aeneas, the exemplary maturing man, comes to embody "the spirit of adolescence, on holiday from paternal control, [who] goes off hunting, is inflamed by passion and, driven by storm and cloud, that is, by confusion of mind, commits adultery" (127). In the commentary of Virgil by the Renaissance Neo-Platonist Landino, the journeys of the Virgilian hero are made to correspond to his moral development in a way that similarly disregards the poem's literal narrative. Troy signifies, for Landino, "the innocent sensuality of childhood"; after learning to abandon his sensual values, Aeneas then confronts the perils of civic life in Carthage; his arrival in Italy signifies the attaining of the contemplative life (Murrin 198). As Murrin remarks, "Such an exegesis ... is finally very impressive, even though we might feel that Landino has used Virgil's narrative as a scaffold for another poem of his own making" (201). The difference between this kind of extended allegorical reading and the allegorical account that Tasso provides in the "Allegoria," proves to be profound, therefore, despite the ostensible similarities. For unlike Fulgentius and Landino, Tasso consistently ties his allegorical reading to the poem's literal narrative. A closer analysis of two examples will help to illustrate how closely he attempts to unite these two senses.



In canto 7 of the *Gerusalemme*, Goffredo decides to hazard his life in a duel with Argante. Raimondo, however, rebukes him for his wish, since by doing so he will put the entire army at risk: "Ah non sia vero / ch'in un capo s'arrischi il campo tutto" (7.62.1-2). While Raimondo's reference to Goffredo as the "capo" recalls Tasso's allegorical identification of him as the intellect, Goffredo as the head of the army also makes sense within the literal narrative of the poem. The Christian army finds itself unable to function when it fails to unite itself under his leadership; therefore, Raimondo's warning concerns itself with the fate of the army, not with the ideal man. Nevertheless, in the words of the "Allegoria," "l'essercito in cui già Rinaldo e tutti gli altri cavalieri, per grazia d'Iddio e per umano avvedimento, sono ritornati e sono ubidienti al Capitano, significa l'uomo già ridotto nello stato della giustizia naturale, quando le potenze superiori comandano come debbono, e le inferiori ubidiscono" (307). Thus Tasso continuously works to tie the literal and allegorical together in the "Allegoria," as he often equates the literal events of the poem and the allegorical meaning that he seeks to derive from them. When he elaborates on Goffredo's identity, to cite another example, he notes that he, "per voler d'Iddio e de'principi, è eletto capitano in questa impresa. Però che l'intelletto è da Dio e da la natura costituito signore sovra l'altre virtù dell'anima, e sovra il corpo; e commanda a quelle con potestà civile, ed a queste con imperio regale" (303). Tasso works to make the two senses seem virtually inseparable.<sup>19</sup> Tasso's allegory thus coexists with the literal narrative in a way altogether unusual for traditional allegorical discourse.

Another example is Tasso's identification of two of his pagan characters, Ismeno and Armida, whom he describes in the following way in the "Allegoria": "Ismeno significa quella tentazione che cerca d'ingannare con false credenze le virtù (per così dire) opinatrice; Armida è la tentazione che tende insidie a la potenza ch'appetisce: e così da quell procedono gli errori dell'opinione, da questa quelli dell'appetito" (304). If the reader comes to the treatise after having read the poem, however, he or she immediately senses the superfluity of the analysis; Tasso's allegorical gloss is hardly needed to point out that Ismeno attempts to deceive the intellects of the Christian army while Armida tempts their carnal appetites. Nevertheless, a consideration of the difference between Ismeno and the character of Error from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* demonstrates that Tasso does not create characters so transparently allegorical that they verge on personification. When Redcrosse comes upon *Errours den*, he sees a creature "Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide, / But th'other halfe did womans shape retaine" (1.1.14). When Redcrosse attacks, she retreats from the light, for, we are told "light she hated" while preferring in "desert darknesse to remaine." When Redcrosse finally gains the upper hand by choking Error, we are told that Error "spewd out of her filthy maw / A floud of poyson horrible and blacke" and that "Her vomit full of bookes and papers was" (1.1.20).

These details derive from the allegorical nature of the character; they exist to define the character in abstract terms, not to individualize the monster in any way. Many of the details are simply not "verisimilar" (in Tasso's sense). When we compare this description to the introduction of Ismeno at the opening of the second canto of Tasso's poem, we sense a profound difference. Here we learn that Ismeno has magical powers, including the ability to make a corpse breathe and feel. We also learn that "or Maccone adora, e fu cristiano" (2.2.1) and that he now practices a diabolically syncretic ritual. While Ismeno is certainly not one of the more individualized characters in the poem, all of the details do help to individualize him. In addition, they are all verisimilar details; a Christian reader can accept that a pagan magician had the power to raise bodies from the dead. It is difficult, however, to imagine any reader accepting Errour as anything but an allegorical construct.

Tasso's characters, that is, are simply not sufficiently abstract to embody the kind of personification typical of the tradition of poetic allegory. This is not to say, however, that the kind of moral allegorization that Tasso provides in his treatise would have been unknown to his readers. In some sixteenth century Italian editions of the *Orlando Furioso*, for example, editors prefaced each canto with *allegorie* that interpreted the actions of the character within the canto in a moral sense, similar to the kinds of interpretations that Tasso provides of his own characters.<sup>20</sup> Tasso, like these readers of Ariosto, emphasizes the *exemplary* status of his characters. Thus, Armida may exemplify the temptations of the flesh while not becoming so abstract as to disappear entirely into her allegorical identification. When viewed in this way, as a narrative of exemplary figures, Tasso's allegory accords well with his earlier insistence, in the *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*, that epic actions and characters be defined in exemplary, universal terms. As noted earlier, Tasso suggested in his early discourses that a character could be considered an epic character in so much as he or she exemplified some virtue or vice, a theory of character that resembles the way in which, in the "Allegoria," Tasso assigns a faculty of the mind or a limb of the body to each character. There exists, in other words, an underlying consistency in Tasso's conception of his epic and its moral meaning from his early discourses through the "Allegoria." Whereas in the discourses he constructed a rhetorical theory of epic poetry that, by presenting a convincing and unified narrative, would move readers, in the "Allegoria" he elaborates on the moral meaning of his character's actions, *how* they should move the reader. The *Discorsi* and the "Allegoria" represent not a shift of fundamental conception but of emphasis. For rather than abandoning Aristotelian mimesis in favor of personification allegory, Tasso propenses a moral allegory that concentrates on the exemplary status of his characters, which is used in the service of a poem based on an "Aristotelianism" that insists on an epic's rhetorical effectiveness, is partially achieved through the creation of exemplary characters. In both trea-

tises, that is, Tasso describes the same kind of poem: an epic where mimesis serves morals.

During the composition of *Gerusalemme Liberata*, Tasso wrote to Scipione Gonzaga that he objected to allegory because it gave readers a license to interpret according to their own capricious inclinations, a practice that leads to an unacceptable multiplicity of readings.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Gerald Bruns has characterized allegory as a method of "radical interpretation," which allows an interpreter to accommodate a sacred text to new ideas and newly perceived truths. Allegory frequently provided a way of reading that proliferated and multiplied meanings, even when wielded by authoritarian and orthodox interpreters, a fact evident from St. Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* and medieval texts such as St. Bernard's sermons on the Song of Songs. The same is true for allegorical poetic texts; for example, the clearly allegorical narrative of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* seems to multiply meanings much as Errour vomits books. Similarly, in a passage that Harrington will translate (unacknowledged) into the preface of his translation of the *Orlando Furioso*, Leone Ebreo, as part of a defense of poetry's seriousness and veracity in the second of his *Dialoghi di amore*, interprets the myth of Perseus on several levels; he distinguishes between the myth's "senso historiale" and how it "significa [...] moralmente" and "significa ancor allegoricamente." He then further divides the allegorical sense into the "allegoria naturale," "un'altra allegoria celeste," and the "allegoria theologale" (58r-58v). Tasso's objections to allegory's proliferation of meanings become clearer in the light of this tradition, as is his decision to write an allegory that works to eliminate that multiplicity, that eliminates all but a particular kind of moral allegory, which he could tie closely to the actions of his characters and thus to the literal sense of the poem. Tasso, that is, "domesticates" allegory, strictly delimiting allegorical meaning to a single moral reading in order to undercut the multiplicity of interpretations – the uncontrollable, capricious "wildness" – that allegory invariably encourages.

In both treatises, then, Tasso works to eliminate multiplicity through an exercise of authorial control. In his second discourse, he objected to the multiple, digressive plots of romance that produce "distrazione nell'animo e impedimento nell'operare" (1.28). Instead, he proposed the creation of epic with a single "end"; in the "Allegoria" he spells out that end for his readers:

Ma per venir finalmente a la conclusione; l'esercito in cui già Rinaldo e tutti gli altri cavalieri, per grazia d'Iddio e per umano avvedimento, sono ritornati e sono ubidienti al Capitano, significa l'uomo già ridotto nello stato della giustizia naturale, quando le potenze superiori comandano come debbono, e le inferiori ubidiscono: ed oltre a ciò, nello stato della ubidienza divina, allora facilmente è disincantato il bosco, espugnata la città, e sconfitto l'esercito nemico; cioè, superati agevolmente tutti gli esterni impedimenti, l'uomo consegue la felicità politica. Ma perchè questa civile beatitudine non deve esser ultimo segno dell'uomo cristiano, ma deve egli mirar più alto a la cristiana

felicità; per questo non desidera Goffredo d'espugnar la terrena Gerusalemme per averne semplicemente il dominio temporale, ma perchè in essa si celebri il culto divino, e possa il Sepolcro liberamente esser visitato da' pii e devoti peregrini. (307-8)

In this passage, Tasso attempts to spell out the univocal meaning he envisaged in the *Discorsi* as proper to epic.<sup>22</sup> He locates that end in the symbiotic merger of political and religious felicity brought about by "the state of divine obedience," which finds a parallel in Tasso's linking of the literal and allegorical senses.<sup>23</sup> Just as the wandering crusaders must return both physically and morally under the banners of their captain, the readers must avoid the erring fate that awaits the readers of romance. The "Allegoria" does not contradict Tasso's theory of an effective epic that he delineates in his *Discorsi*; rather, it leads wandering readers back to the single end *he* had envisioned, under his own banners, moving them towards a political and religious felicity.

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## NOTES

- 1 Weinberg states that the early *Discorsi* were begun around 1565 (2.646), though others date them as early as 1561. For a consideration of the question, see Baldassarri, "Ancora sulla cronologia."
- 2 As early as 15 June 1576, however, Tasso expected to preface the poem with the prose "Allegoria"; on that day he wrote to Scipione Gonzaga, informing him that he intended "di far stampare l'allegoria in fronte del poema" (194).
- 3 Attempts to use the "Allegoria" as a guide to reading the poem include Roche, Derla, Murrin 87-127, and Fichter 112-55.
- 4 See the following: De Sanctis 2.150; Rhu, "From Aristotle to Allegory"; Treip 53-94; Teskey 126-27; and, with a related view, Hallyn.
- 5 The most recent version of the traditional disparagement of allegory is presented by Gordon Teskey, who argues that allegory enacts a violent imposition of meaning on a disordered, chaotic reality.
- 6 See, for example, Kates 51-65 and Rhu "Tasso's First Discourse".
- 7 See, for example, the discussion of relevant chapters in Halliwell's commentary on the *Poetics* (164-76).
- 8 See Baldassarri, "Introduzione," and, for an extended consideration of the ways in which Tasso's theory expands upon and at times contradicts Aristotle's, see Javitch, "Dietro la maschera."
- 9 See Javitch, "Self-justifying Norms"; Baldassarri also considers the issue in "Introduzione."
- 10 Baldassarri suggests the attempts, first, to extend Aristotle's analysis of epic and, second, to respond to the *cinquecento* defenders of romance constitute the primary strands of the early *Discorsi*. He also notes that the defenders of romance also appealed to Aristotle and attempted to extend his poetic theory so as to include romance. See "Introduzione".
- 11 It is also worth noting, in this regard, that much Renaissance thinking on Aristotle was heavily influenced by the interpretive tradition that derived from Averroes' medieval commentary on the treatise (through the Latin translation of Hermannus Alemannus), in which Aristotle is said to hold a rhetorical view of poetry, that it is either praise (*laudatio*) or blame (*vituperatio*). See Minnis and Scott 277-313.
- 12 Cf. Rhu's comment in *The Genesis*: "Veracity is not verisimilitude; but once the value of truth



- yields to the needs of rhetorical efficacy, this distinction can easily get lost" (34). I would argue that Tasso wants his readers to miss the distinction; verisimilitude is essential precisely because a reader will accept verisimilar events as true.
- 13 See Vickers.
  - 14 It is interesting to note how Tasso invokes chapter nine of *The Poetics*. While in the second discourse he elaborates on Aristotle's distinction *between* poetry and history, he ignores it in the first discourse in order to claim the historical subject for epic.
  - 15 Cf. Rhu's sense of this discourse: "continuity and unity of plot are the real issues. [...] and they are more matters of narrative structure than aspects of meaning and moral interpretation" ("From Aristotle to Allegory" 117). I would argue, however, that the issues of plot structure are inseparable from rhetorical considerations for Tasso. Unity of plot is crucial precisely because of its impact on meaning and moral interpretation.
  - 16 Consider, for example, Dante's discussion of literal and allegorical meaning in the *Convivio*: "L'uno [senso] si chiama litterale, e questo è quello che non si stende più oltre che la lettera de le parole fittizie, sì come sono le favole de li poeti. L'altro si chiama allegorico, e questo è quello che si nasconde sotto 'l manto di queste favole, ed è una veritate ascosa sotto bella menzogna" (2.1.3). Dante's emphasis on the fictional nature of the literal narrative and the necessity of stripping away this "beautiful lie" in order to arrive at the "hidden truth" is echoed by Boccaccio's discussion of poetic truth in his *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, where he declares that poetry "veils truth in a fair and fitting garment of fiction," and that fiction "is a form of discourse, which, under guise of invention, illustrates or proves an idea; and, as its superficial aspect is removed, the meaning of the author is clear. If then, sense is revealed from under the veil of fiction, the composition of fiction is not idle nonsense" (39, 48). In both the Dante of the *Convivio* and Boccaccio, the "truth" of poetry lies beneath the surface, and it is necessary to discard the literal sense to get at it.
  - 17 Montgomery argues that Tasso's view "seems to veer drastically away from the views of his contemporaries for whom the fundamental opposition of the credible, verisimilar surface of fiction to allegory is not even a point of debate" (54).
  - 18 See, e.g., Treip 55.
  - 19 For a consideration of how thoroughly Tasso weaves the metaphor of the body into the narrative of the poem, see Savoia.
  - 20 Javitch discusses, as an example of this practice, the 1553 edition of Ariosto's poem by G. A. Valvassori in *Proclaiming a Classic* 36-39.
  - 21 "Perché ciascuno de gli interpreti suole dar l'allegoria a suo capriccio; né mancò mai a i buoni poeti chi desse a i lor poemi varie allegorie" (192-93).
  - 22 When I argue that Tasso sought to create a univocal poem, I do not mean to suggest that he achieved it. One of the most interesting aspects of the poem is precisely where such unity and univocality break down. See Zatti for a consideration of these issues. For the argument, however, that "the *Gerusalemme* belongs to the order marked by Homer, Virgil, and Milton, where allegory plays no important role" and that the "only kind of allegory that operates to any degree is oblique and problematic moral exemplification," see Kennedy.
  - 23 It also, of course, finds a parallel in Counter-Reformation ideology. In his recent book on epic and empire, Quint has argued that there are definite ideological, religious, and moral underpinnings to the unity and teleology of epic narrative (21-46); he explores the relationship of Tasso's poem to Counter-Reformation political and religious ideology at 213-47.

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## Time-Consciousness in Italo Svevo's *La Coscienza di Zeno*

[N]ec proprie dicitur, 'tempora sunt tria, praeteritum, praesens, et futurum,' sed fortasse proprie diceretur, 'tempora sunt tria, praesens de praeteritis, praesens de praesentibus, praesens de futuris.' sunt enim haec in anima tria ... praesens de praeteritis memoria, praesens de praesentibus contuitus, praesens de futuris expectatio. (Augustine 11.20.26)

[Nor is it correct to say, "There are three times, past, present and future," but perhaps it might be correct to say, "There are three times: a present of past things, a present of present things, and a present of future things." For indeed there are also three such as these in the soul ... the present of past things is memory, the present of present things is sight, the present of future things is expectation.]<sup>1</sup>

Book XI of Augustine's *Confessiones* presents many difficulties for the reader who, with the text's temporal shift to the present, is now implicated as a participant both by the narrative voice and by the narrative subject.<sup>2</sup> The text is an intellectual autobiography which traces a life and strives for truth; these confessions invoke the reader, "ut dicamus omnes" [that we may all say together] (Augustine 11.1.1), while transcending the subject. Time interrelates the diverging discourses, generating a locus for judgment. By combining descriptive psychology and epistemology in his temporal analysis, Augustine refutes time's privileged ontological status and considers it only in terms of human experience. In particular, Book XI establishes the transience of the present while asserting the permanence of presence.

The roles of truth, of confession and of the reader also figure prominently in Italo Svevo's *La coscienza di Zeno*.<sup>3</sup> However, unlike in the *Confessiones*, the totalizing capacity of time which, like the trinity, is at once three definite moments, is questioned by the fragmented narrating subject. Time-consciousness is a defining characteristic of modernism, and Svevo's text is no exception: temporality is the diagnostic tool which allows the protagonist to distinguish between disease and health and the panacea which allows him to arrive at a provisional cure.

Within each chapter the events are arranged chronologically, but the narrative frequently shifts between temporal planes. The organization of the narra-

tive material according to subject matter further minimizes the temporal progression because these intersecting and imbricating life situations abolish chronological continuity. Unlike Augustine's text, Zeno's life-segments appear as distinct and exclusionary, inhibiting a unitary representation of the individual. This lack of a totalizing and coherent time-consciousness suggests the lack of a stable ontological presence. The plurality of time frames is representative of the *mal du siècle*, a common literary motif of the social milieu (Biasin 66).

The title of the text suggests the relevance of time-consciousness by explicitly referring to the protagonist's self-awareness and by implicitly referring to his namesake, Zeno of Elea. The famous paradoxes of this Eleatic are *reductio ad absurdum* of Pythagorean contentions of motion; they would seem to demonstrate that any kind of motion is incoherent and, therefore, illusory. Zeno Cosini is immersed in these dilemmas, caught between the contradictory representations of chronology and of continuity.<sup>4</sup> His very name is derived from the Greek *xenos*, meaning strange, foreign, alien and, significantly, guest or host. The etymological origin is suggestive of the protagonist's textual position which is always outside, beyond the borders of the established order. Paradoxically, however, Zeno is entirely reliant upon a world within which he seems unable to function.

Time's position in the narrative is dependent upon its representation. A quintessential property of time is the difference between the past and the future. Augustine subsumes this distinction into the present (a strategy that the act of reading recreates); however, when considered in terms of definite temporal spheres, time is perceived as being anisotropic (lacking symmetry between the two directions of the temporal continuum). In other words, people tend to conceive of time as temporally asymmetric, a belief which contrasts with their attitude toward space, which they assume to be isotropic. Psychoanalysis and the fictive premise of *La coscienza di Zeno* are based upon just such a perception. The anisotropic perspective is implicated in another metaphysical doctrine: the belief that there exists an ontological distinction between the past and the future. This differentiation is represented by a ramifying model of reality in which the past consists of a fixed, definite course of events and the future contains nothing but a manifold of branching possibilities. These aspects of time are thought to distinguish it from space, which possesses no such features. Although the narrator's self-representation denies infinite possibility, events are not reduced to a deterministic inevitability. Zeno Cosini's textual deferrals would appear to sublate agency; however, in practice, they do not negate potentiality.

In *La coscienza di Zeno* the focus is not simply time. Rather, it is the intersection of time and human experience, where time is human and human experience is temporal. The issue is not how people conceptualize time, but how people directly encounter and experience it. This interaction suggests a possi-

ble dual schematization of time (*prima facie* consistent with Augustine, but challenging the supposition that past, present and future are compatible attributes) as outlined by the British idealist philosopher John McTaggart (2.9-31). He conceives of time as two concomitant series. In the A-series, time is divided into past, present and future. The series is subjective; it locates an event relative to a now, which is necessarily always in flux. In the B-series, time is conceptualized as a predicate-scheme: before/after or earlier/later. The B-series is objective; time is homogenous; all points in time are of equal value; temporality exists in relation to other points. According to McTaggart, it is not possible to say that any point in time is past, present or future: the points simply succeed one another. The B-series is the aspect of the text that can be reordered sequentially because the succession of events is not *eo ipso* a temporal series. The movement of the agent is always situated at one point, looking forward and looking backward to the other members of the series. In the fixing of the agents, the temporal positions must be indicated as either past, present or future in relative and not in absolute terms.

In *La coscienza di Zeno* the narrating voice negates the traditional anisotropic interpretation of time in favor of an isotropic one; the question of time's asymmetry is an empirical matter concerning the properties of an aspect of the world that is independent of human activity. If time is isotropic, then its directions differ only with respect to their relations to other things. Hence events are asymmetrical, but time itself is not. The single anisotropic elements with which the individual consciousness interacts are negated by the isotropic representation of temporality. In a sense, this incompatibility reflects McTaggart's argument for the unreality of time.<sup>5</sup>

In this phenomenological interpretation, McTaggart's two series are not separate and alternative approaches to time; instead objective time (B) is grounded in subjective time (A). The absolute objective order is replaced by the absolute subject or, more specifically, by the absolute temporal position of the subject. Just as the *hic* is absolute in oriented space, so is the *nunc* absolute in experienced time. Augustine's and McTaggart's theories converge contradictorily in *La coscienza di Zeno*. While narration in general obeys an Augustinian scheme in which the narrative is past, but appears as present, and the future also becomes present, since it is the point from which the narrator recounts his story, in Svevo's text the narration requires this present-convergence, but also sublates the incompatible relational predicates (past and future). As Biasin has noted: "Within time, the present tense is in its turn privileged to a certain extent above the other tenses – past and future – that make up the 'mixed time' of man" (88).

The first chapter, *Prefazione* ascribed to Dottor S., is also, temporally speaking, the last section of the text, acting both as the narrative's point of departure and as its destination.<sup>6</sup> It is a framing device that situates the doctor both within and beyond the narrative space. This authorial positioning dis-

tances the narrator-patient, Zeno, and bestows an aura of inviolability on the doctor, who acts as judge, jury and executioner. To mitigate the perception of any arbitrariness derived from his privileged status, Dottor S. attempts to validate his own reliability by warning the reader of the unreliability of the text's narrator:

Di psico-analisi non parlerò perché qui entro se ne parla già a sufficienza. Debbo scusarmi di aver indotto il mio paziente a scrivere la sua autobiografia; gli studiosi di psico-analisi arricceranno il naso a tanta novità [...]. Se sapesse quante sorprese potrebbero risulargli dal commento delle tante verità e bugie ch'egli ha quì [sic] accumulate! (Svevo 649)

His caveat necessarily extends to his own words. The doctor's naive expectation of truth through autobiography suggests a manipulation of temporal experiences to achieve a self-justifying truth.

The non-linear chronology of the narration is not in itself unique. It inserts itself, as the good doctor prescribes, into the established literary genre of the autobiography. In the traditional autobiography, the point of view is univocal (that of the protagonist-narrator). In *La coscienza di Zeno*, Dottor S.'s presence and perspective loom over Zeno Cosini's story-telling, claiming to be part of the therapeutic process and rendering the narrative bivocal.<sup>7</sup> The protagonist's manuscript is framed by the psychoanalytical cure, a device which achieves the doubling of the temporal perspective. Both the structure of the text and the historico-cultural situation from which it arises (the diffusion of *mitteleuropäisch* psychoanalysis) expose the fictions of this panacea. Consequently, the innovative aspects of the text arise from the fusion of the clinical session and of the autobiographical genre.<sup>8</sup>

The second chapter *Preambolo* is Zeno Cosini's introduction to his memoirs. In temporal terms this section is the penultimate (preceding *Prefazione*), presenting and misrepresenting the personal history that follows. This teleologic circularity is a recurrent motif: the end returning to the beginning, the relationship between the writing subject and the narrative subject, the imbrication of the consciousness of the narrator and of the protagonist, where all converge in a self-exposing authorial history.<sup>9</sup> Zeno's memory is filtered through time and space, resulting in the distortion of images:

Più di dieci lustri me ne separano e i miei occhi presbiti forse potrebbero arrivarci se la luce che ancora ne riverbera non fosse tagliata da ostacoli d'ogni genere, vere alte montagne: i miei anni e qualche mia ora. (Svevo 650)

In this metaphorical vision space displaces time. Furthermore, the present dominates: in interior time, years and hours become equivalent. It is Bergsonian *durée* defined less by succession than by coexistence. The past and



present do not denote two successive movements, but rather two elements that coexist in precarious and fluctuating balance.

In addition, the problem of writing expressed by the narrator is related temporally. Language cannot provide a self-present meaning; Derridian *différance* enters where meaning eludes self-present awareness. When it describes the act of writing as "[la] fronte si corruga perché ogni parola è composta di tante lettere e il presente imperioso risorge ed offusca il passato" (Svevo 650), the narrative voice recognizes that time itself is an endless deferring of presence and of presents, both of which disrupt the written word. Writing in or about the past is equivalent to not living; it is a manifestation of absence because the signifier is always displaced from the signified. Augustine is refuted.

*Preambolo* concludes with the unification of the three temporal periods: "Eccomi ben lontano dalle immagini che precorrono il sonno. Ritenterò domani" (Svevo 651). The past is evoked in the present which is itself continuously being displaced by the future. Following McTaggart, the 'moving now' conception of time is not actualized. Zeno's desire to write and his desire to die converge in a procrastinating default. The entire narration proceeds on multiple temporal levels, fluctuating between predilections for the past, for the present and for the future. Time itself slips out of joint, and each person must set it right.

It is with the third chapter *Il fumo* and the four that follow that the thematically oriented narrative evolves. Once again the discussion commences with reflections on the nature of writing. The doctor proposes beginning with an historical analysis, but this prescription proves impossible to follow. The act of writing is a diachronic process. Similar to McTaggart's phenomenological conceptualization, the single events (the segments in Zeno's life) that the narrating voice relates are, for the most part, diachronic; however the interrelationship and the interaction between these events is synchronic. This imbrication of two incompatible systems perpetuates the illusion that the act of writing is synchronic: an impossibility that the protagonist Zeno recognizes as such.

Zeno Cosini's obsessive compulsion with smoking leads to the development of a new horologic gauge which replaces the Gregorian calendar with the "ultima sigaretta" (Svevo 657). The phenomenon of the last cigarette, "U. S.," operates analogously to B.C. and A.D. The designation marks time distinctly, bestowing meaning it otherwise lacks. Hence the concern for mathematical permutations:

Certe date erano da me preferite per la concordanza delle cifre [...]. «Nono giorno del nono mese del 1899». Significativa nevero? [...] «Primo giorno del primo mese del 1901» [...]. «Terzo giorno del sesto mese del 1912 ore 24». (Svevo 658)

The solar calendar provides the impetus for a personalized one in which the notation "U. S." acts as a sign of change in the life of the protagonist. The

overdetermined intertextual references to Dante's *Vita nova* reinforce Zeno's proposal to break with the past.<sup>10</sup> Even his father's death is interpreted in terms of its relation to Zeno's disease: "«15.4.1890 ore 4 1/2. Muore mio padre. U. S.» Per chi non lo sapesse quelle due ultime lettere non significano *United States*, ma ultima sigaretta" (Svevo 678). The emotive hierarchy of the two events remains blurred; however, the truth value of the proposition is clear.

Zeno's oral fetish in no way contradicts the Freudian pleasure principle. Repetition is a manifestation of what has been repressed and is a substitute for remembering. Zeno is actively compelled to find expression in the repetition of the same experience, a source of pleasure. Whatever the protagonist has repressed remains, contrary to most compulsions, pleasurable. The satisfaction derived from this experience is linked to the cigarette's proscriptive and thanatic charge. In this sense, smoking can be understood as a form of sublimation.

Chain-smoking is the mechanism through which Zeno scans his interior time. Each cigarette represents a distinct memory, and smoking therefore triggers the imagination to recollect times past.<sup>11</sup> Ironically, the first brand of cigarettes he smoked are no longer commercially available; they are the physical representation of a lost and irrevocable youth that the protagonist cannot recover.

These individual memories can be, and are, expressed as a diachronic process. McTaggart's model is useful for conceptualizing the relationship between the synchronic and the diachronic aspects of time as well as for explaining its isotropic and its anisotropic dimensions; however, the model does not address the nexus between human experience and time. A contemporary of McTaggart, Edmund Husserl, outlines the temporal structure of experience in his phenomenology on time-consciousness.<sup>12</sup> According to Husserl (whose importance to Derrida in this respect is evident), time cannot be fixed in a selfsame moment of immediate presence; instead it is a perpetual flux of protentional and retentional traces. The specific trans-temporal phasings can be visualized more clearly as a Cartesian graph. The vertical axis represents individual experiences at a given time, while the horizontal axis represents the sequence of events that are made up of individual experiences. The points below the x-axis are memories, and the points above the x-axis are anticipations; the intersection of the two axes forms a sensation. Any single experience bears a systematic relationship to the past and to the future experiences. Because of the phenomenological difference between memory and anticipation (and therefore, of the shifting position of the intersection), Husserl's model suggests that experience is asymmetrical.

Zeno's time-consciousness is Husserlian in that his actions are immediately and disproportionally dependent upon protentive and retentive impeti. When Zeno considers betraying his wife Augusta, he ascribes a protentive investment to his act:

Fu marcata in quelle ore angosciose in caratteri grandi nel mio vocabolario alla lettera C (Carla) la data di quel giorno con l'annotazione: «ultimo tradimento». Ma il primo tradimento effettivo, che impegnava a tradimenti ulteriori, seguì soltanto il giorno dopo. (Svevo 868)

Zeno's actions are temporally askew because emotive consciousness precedes the chrono-logical. In the Cartesian model the stream of events prior to the sensation corresponds to recollection, and the stream of events subsequent to the sensation corresponds to retention (Husserl § 14-19). Recollection refers to memory, while retention figures into consciousness of the present. For Husserl, the living present (*lebendige Gegenwart*) articulates the retention of what is just past with the protention of what is to be and is therefore the locus of meaning. However, from Zeno's perspective as a privileged narrator relating past events from the future, the phenomenological difference between memory and anticipation no longer produces an asymmetrical experience, and meaning-generating loci (among which must be included the position of the reader) are multiplied.

Directly and explicitly linked to the notion of *fumo* is another recurring motif: disease. The need to smoke outweighs the proscription, a tension which leads to anxiety:

Giacché mi fa male non fumerò mai più, ma prima voglio farlo per l'ultima volta. [...] Quella malattia mi procurò il secondo dei miei disturbi: lo sforzo di liberarmi dal primo. (Svevo 656)

Disease itself is extremely temporal: one often speaks of the progression and the various stages of an illness, the final one being death. For Zeno, a man obsessed with death, disease is *durée*:

Compresi finalmente che cosa fosse la perfetta salute umana quando indovinai che il presente per lei [Augusta] era una verità tangibile in cui si poteva segregarsi e starci caldi. [...] [L]e ore dei pasti erano tenute rigidamente e anche quelle del sonno. Esistevano, quelle ore, e si trovavano sempre al loro posto [...]. Ma mi colse allora un'altra piccola malattia da cui non potevo più guarire. Una cosa da niente: la paura d'invecchiare e sopra tutto la paura di morire. (Svevo 815, 816, 820)

Zeno conceives of health as a constant state of atemporality, but he does not consider himself to be healthy. Augusta can keep those hours in place, but Zeno cannot; she institutionalizes time, while he is oppressed by it. Consequently, the future manifests itself in a Heideggerian death anticipation. Future's priority derives from the projective impetus of *Dasein*'s intentionality. (Heidegger 2.3.65). The present and the past are grasped together and are interpreted by way of the future which, for Zeno, is not an infinitely extended, open horizon. The future finds its closure in death, where future possibility of being and

non-being converge. This existential finitude manifests itself in anxiety (Zeno's obsession with disease and death), which leads to self-deception by regarding the future as simply a coming present. Zeno Cosini, in Sartrean *mauvaise foi*, infinitizes the personal future and therefore falsifies it.<sup>13</sup> Since he considers himself oppressed by time, Zeno clings to a Shelleyan Ozymandias which he perceives as beyond the pale:

Quando avessi saputo [...] che io definitivamente avevo perduta Ada, almeno non avrei più dovuto lottare col tempo che sarebbe continuato a trascorrere lentamente senza ch'io sentissi il bisogno di sospingerlo. Una cosa definitiva è sempre calma perché staccata dal tempo. (Svevo 749)

Zeno's perception of a definitive existence outside the transitory extends to society where everyone except him leads a healthy life. Time has become his gravest disease.<sup>14</sup> He anticipates death inauthentically because he refuses to constitute himself and his actions on it. Instead, Zeno fabricates potential futures to justify the present, as seen during his affair with Carla Gerco: "La mia coscienza è tanto delicata che, con le mie maniere, già allora mi preparavo ad attenuare il mio futuro rimorso" (Svevo 841). *Dasein* still projects, but it is directed to objects and events rather than to its ultimate potentiality.<sup>15</sup> These substitutes find their ultimate embodiment in disease: "Non la morte desiderai ma la malattia, una malattia che mi servisse di pretesto per fare quello che volevo, o che me lo impedisse" (Svevo 868). Disease displaces death as a constituting principle. In fact, when he accuses Carla of being a person "che non poteva intendere il valore del tempo" (Svevo 850), he is speaking also of himself.

The relativity of past to present would appear to reinforce the conceit of free will derived from a privileging of the future (as per Heidegger), therefore precluding the possibility of a deterministic conclusion. However, free will manifests itself in a passive ineptitude that perceives life as casual (not causal), absurd, unpredictable and original. In *La coscienza di Zeno*, retention and protention are fused, negating the distinction between primary and secondary memory, and similarly between primary and secondary expectation. The three temporal dimensions (past, present, future) are not simply arranged alongside one another. An ontological experience necessitates an imbrication of the triad because to be conscious is to be in the past, in the present and in the future at once. However, this blurring of boundaries does not sublate difference. On the contrary, temporality consists precisely of the possibility of their being differentiated:

Evito i sogni e i ricordi [...]. Parlo con la gente e mentre dico una cosa tento involontariamente di ricordarne un'altra che poco prima dissi o feci e che non ricordo più o anche un mio pensiero che mi pare di un'importanza enorme, di quell'importanza che mio



padre attribuì a quei pensieri ch'ebbe poco prima di morire e che pur lui non seppa ricordare.

Se non voglio finire al manicomio, via con questi giocattoli. (Svevo 1096)

To obfuscate past, present and future is to abandon reason; slippage of consciousness between temporal dimensions leads to madness. Transcending the individual perspective, the narrative voice appropriates a Heideggerian stance in its granting priority to the future. However, the narrative subject's privileging of the present is the expression of a pre- and extra-philosophical tendency to deny the finitude of being and time. The present's status appears to be both ontological and epistemological because what is present "is," while what is past and what is future "are" not. Being and being-present seem equivalent. Epistemologically, what is present is, or at least can be, directly attributable to Zeno's cognition, while what is past and what is future are accessible only through the indirect and less reliable channels of memory, of expectation and of prediction. To experience life means to accept the future *qua* future, death. This being-in-the-world toward death is most thoroughly developed in the last section of the *La coscienza di Zeno*.

*Psico-analisi*, the concluding chapter, is in many respects the most suggestive for a discussion of time-consciousness. The entire text shifts temporal and narrative frames from abstract recollections of things past to the more concretely temporal form of a diary (specific dates are provided and the individual's experiences are inserted into a historical dimension, thereby conferring authenticity). The narrative abandons the illusion of spontaneity, since the narrating writer finds himself in the same compositional trap that held him in *Preambolo*; however, the lag between the occurrence of the narrated events and the act of writing retains an illusional immediacy. The suggestion of an unmediated experience between narrator and reader is what permits the diary to operate as an idealized locus for confession. From a temporal perspective, the specific entries into the diary are diachronic: the 15 maggio 1915 entry (Svevo 1096-101) succeeds the 3 maggio 1915 entry (Svevo 1079-96). From a narratological perspective, the dates only obscure the distance between the writing narrator and the narrative voice.

The stylistic consequence of appropriating this genre is a convergence of the narrative's time with the time of narration. The present tense is used in order to emphasize the literary aspect of the narrator's endeavor. The act of writing in the concrete present serves to conceal the trans-historical traces that reveal it to be an artificial construct.

In this final section of the text, Zeno comes to the realization that temporal stability and ontological presence can exist only in writing:

L'ho finita con la psico-analisi [...]. [P]er rimpiazzare la psico-analisi, io mi rimetto ai miei cari fogli. Da un anno non avevo scritto una parola [...]. Ma ora mi trovo squili-

brato e malato più che mai e, scrivendo, credo che mi netterò più facilmente del male che la cura m'ha fatto. Almeno sono sicuro che questo è il vero sistema per ridare importanza ad un passato che più non duole e far andare via più rapido il presente uggioso. (Svevo 1079)

The negation of time is a feasible and stable component of Zeno Cosini's time-consciousness. The narrating voice does not substitute individual atemporality with universal chronological progression, nor does it substitute anisotropy with isotropy. The narrating voice refutes the temporal premises of psychoanalysis.

Zeno's invectives against psychoanalysis are an assault on its foundations: the tenet that the present can be properly understood only through the past is unacceptable to him. This priority that psychoanalysis grants to the past, similar to its privileged status with Dilthey,<sup>16</sup> is suggested in the belief that signification is a category of memory. The conclusion is that one can discern the meaning of one's life only *a posteriori*.<sup>17</sup>

For Zeno the implications of this doctrine are depressing if not paradoxical. The individual will never be able to understand his or her own life as well as another can because he or she is always, by definition, involved in it.<sup>18</sup> Zeno categorically refutes the implication that temporality of life precludes its comprehension and necessarily relegates to the judgement of others (psychoanalysts) the search for its meaning.

The concluding chapter's privileging of the future on a universal level does nothing to dispel the atemporal preferentiality of individual existence:

Oggi che siamo alla metà del mese sono rimasto colpito della difficoltà che offre il nostro calendario ad una regolare e ordinata risoluzione. Nessun mese è uguale all'altro. Per rilevare meglio la propria risoluzione si vorrebbe finire di fumare insieme a qualche cosa d'altro, il mese p. e. Ma salvo il Luglio e Agosto e il Dicembre e il Gennaio non vi sono altri mesi che si susseguano e facciano il paio in quanto a quantità di giorni. Un vero disordine nel tempo! (Svevo 1096-97)

Zeno remains at the anisotropic level with time interpreted, not as a progression, but in a Bergsonian *durée* defining a virtual multiplicity. Memory is the locus for the coexistence of the varying degrees of difference in this multiplicity. It is a plurality which diverges into senselessness or converges into nothingness.<sup>19</sup> The impossibility of establishing an ontological foundation necessarily retains the living present as the privileged interpretive locus: "[C]ome potevo intendere la mia vita quando non ne conoscevo quest'ultimo periodo?" (Svevo 1115) Meaning cannot be generated from a position in constant flux.<sup>20</sup>

Duration is linked to consciousness, while relativity belongs to the concrete: one is metaphysical, the other physical. In the narrative, the outbreak of the First World War represents the textual displacement of internal conscious-

ness by external reality. This process distorts the ontological presence by inscribing it into a temporal progression: public history.

In the text, past, present and future are contemporaneously privileged dimensions. Each one of the temporal spheres operates differently at the narrative and metanarrative levels. The present reflects the paradoxical impossibility of the ontological presence of the narrating voice. The past, as privileged by psychoanalysis, demystifies the clinical process and makes manifest the threatening conclusions inherent in the act of memory retrieval. The future suggests a progression from the past or from the present (one which an individual is unable to make) existing only in terms of public history. Thus the future is devoid of value for the individual grounded in ontological presence because it is the anisotropic perspective that makes protentions and retentions possible.

Therefore, Zeno's experiences are Husserlian to the point of sublating time; transcending the self, Zeno's experiences are also Heideggerian, privileging the future to the point of its destruction of time. The concluding image prescribes an apocalyptic cure: "Ci sarà un'esplosione enorme che nessuno udrà e la terra ritornata alla forma di nebulosa errerà nei cieli priva di parassiti e di malattie" (Svevo 1117).

In the novel, the negation of time suggests a denial of progression, since progress is a diachronic process which, in a synchronic form, cannot exist except as stagnation. For this reason *La coscienza di Zeno* is not a *Bildungsroman* because in the absence of time Zeno cannot develop. He is trapped in a state of stasis – as all individuals are – which will only end with the final, apocalyptic vision of the explosion. Thus the reader is confronted with this paradox: time is non-existent, and time is eternal. Only through time is time conquered.

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## NOTES

- 1 The translation is mine.
- 2 Husserl's amusing observations retain their validity: "Die Kapitel 13-28 des XI. Buches der *Confessiones* muß auch heute noch jedermann gründlich studieren, der sich mit dem Zeitproblem beschäftigt. Denn herrlich weit gebracht und erheblich weiter gebracht als dieser große und ernst ringende Denker hat es die wissenstolze Neuzeit in diesen Dingen nicht. Noch heute mag man mit Augustinus fagen: *si nemo a me quaerat, scio, si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio.*" (Husserl, *Vorlesungen* 368 [2]) [Chapters 13-28 of Book XI of the *Confessions* must even today be thoroughly studied by everyone concerned with the problem of time. For no one in this knowledge-proud modern generation has made more masterful or significant progress in these matters than this great thinker who struggled so earnestly with the problem. One may still say with Augustine: *si nemo a me quaerat, scio, si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio.*] (Husserl, *Phenomenology* 21)
- 3 Barilli (103) makes passing reference to this influence.
- 4 The last name Cosini, a variant of *cosine*, meaning "little things of no consequence," is suggestive of how the protagonist elects to confront life. For an exhaustive examination of the ironic,

the pejorative and the paradoxical implications of the name Zeno Cosini, see Treitel.

- 5 For a thorough analysis of McTaggart's proof, see Farmer.
- 6 This variant of the edited manuscript trope finds immediate Italian models in Luigi Pirandello's *Il fu Mattia Pascal* (1904), Alessandro Manzoni's *Promessi Sposi* (1840) and Ugo Foscolo's *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (1802). In this last instance Lorenzo Alderani publishes the manuscript *per amore*, while Dottor S. *per dispetto*. The final note in Elio Vittorini's *Conversazione in Sicilia* (1941) dispels the need for this rhetorical gambit in that it considers all texts to circulate independently of authorial intention, imagining that all manuscripts are found in a bottle.
- 7 The identity of the doctor (Schmitz, Samigli, Svevo, Sigmund, Scarfoglio, Stolto – numerous possibilities, some more likely than others) becomes irrelevant because the reader displaces him to assume the authoritative position of veracitydeterminator. Given this usurpation of authority, the reader is subject to the same transference (whether he or she elects to recognize it or not) as Dottor S. See Pouillon; Rosowsky; and Saccone 58-64.
- 8 Zeno, *qua* narrating voice, narrates his disease as Saccone (66) insists; however, the diseases are contextualized within distorted and exclusionary life experiences. The text is not an autobiography, nor is it a confession (if for no other reason than the non-coincidence of the authorial and narrative *personae*); however, the text retains autobiographical and confessional traces that necessarily result from a diachronic self-analysis.
- 9 Croce's dictum, "tutta la storia è storia contemporanea", seems particularly relevant because the narrative voice's historiographic emplotment confers a meaning that can only refer and defer to the present.
- 10 "Ancora oggi mi pare che se quella data potesse ripetersi, io saprei iniziare una nuova vita" (Svevo 658). For the presence of Dante and the truth function in *La coscienza di Zeno*, see Freccero.
- 11 See Savelli's analysis on the ambiguous relationship between each last cigarette and events.
- 12 For a critique of the Husserlian position, see Derrida.
- 13 For a more thorough treatment of the relationship between time and disease, see Biasin 63-99.
- 14 As though time were his personal cross to bear, Zeno takes pleasure in artificial temporal divisions which he himself naturalizes: "Io, che lavoravo tanto poco, conservai sempre un grande rispetto per il giorno festivo che divide la vita in periodi brevi che la rendono più sopportabile" (Svevo 760).
- 15 Zeno's inauthenticity manifests itself in his emotional investment in actions which are often temporally desequentialized.
- 16 See Dilthey. Dilthey holds that life is the ultimate nexus of reality behind which people cannot go. Life is understood as the historical totality of human experience. Dilthey claims a priority of the human sciences over the natural sciences: the former are based on inner experience while the latter examine the outer experience. Zeno makes the opposing claim: truth exists only in the natural sciences. When he goes to visit Dottor Paoli he distinguishes between the two fields: "Ecco finalmente una vera analisi e non più una psico-analisi. Mi ricordai con simpatia e commozione del mio passato lontano di chimico e di analisi vere: Io, un tubetto e un reagente! L'altro, l'analizzato, dorme finché il reagente imperiosamente non lo desti. La resistenza nel tubetto non c'è o cede alla minima elevazione della temperatura e la simulazione manca del tutto. In quel tubetto non avveniva nulla che potesse ricordare il mio comportamento quando per far piacere al dottor S. inventavo nuovi particolari della mia infanzia che dovevano confermare la diagnosi di Sofocle. Qui, invece, tutto era verità" (Svevo 1093-94).
- 17 Existentialism shares this dictum in so far as *a posteriori* refers to *post-mortem*.
- 18 This situation is reminiscent of the paradox of *eudaimonia* in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (1.10). Because happiness can be ascribed only to a complete life, one could never call a person happy until he or she were dead and no longer able to enjoy it.
- 19 In Luigi Pirandello's *Uno, nessuno e centomila* (1926), Vitangelo Moscarda finds his ontological stability displaced when his mirrored reflection does not project a coherent image. The whole is as unstable as the fragments are incomplete.



20 Zeno's historiographic concern is similar to Croce's, who concluded that historical consciousness cannot be self-reflexive.

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# Subject Pronoun Variation in the Northern Italian Geolinguistic Continuum\*

## Introduction

The striking similarity between the Northern Italian and French pronominal systems has been noted by many linguists (cf. Grassi 114, to give but one example). However, not enough is known about how these dialects differ from one another in their subject pronoun systems. The hypothesis to be explored in this study is that the dialects which are geographically situated roughly between French and Italian form a morphosyntactic continuum which parallels the well-documented Northern Italian phonological continuum.

As Chambers and Trudgill (1980:125) point out, the isogloss, despite its traditional prominence in geolinguistic description and in linguistic atlases, does not always in fact do justice to linguistic reality. While a valuable representational tool, isoglosses incorrectly imply an abrupt change from one feature (or set of features) to another. But linguistic reality is in fact far more complex than this convenient visual aid would suggest: language systems tend to blend into one another gradually, at times almost imperceptibly. To date, relatively little attention has been paid to such "transition zones" in the geolinguistic literature (cf. Chambers and Trudgill, 142), and what research there is tends to concentrate on phonetics and phonology rather than morphosyntax, despite the fact that the latter has many highly variable features when examined in the context of nonstandard varieties.

The present study is an attempt to examine one such variable morpho-syntactic feature, the presence of subject pronouns, in the context of the well-documented dialect continuum of Northern Italy. Various dialectological documentary sources are used to gain a preliminary idea of the scope and the nature of the problem, and to examine some of the issues that arise from it. This methodology allows us (however tentatively) to shed some light on some interesting theoretical questions, such as the dynamics of variation and diachronic change in pronoun systems, the role of lexical diffusion in such processes, and (on a more abstract level) the status of "parameters" in formal linguistic theory. One such parameter is the so-called "null-subject parameter" (cf. Chomsky 55ff, Roberge and Vinet 22).

The present study does not propose to deal with subject pronouns in such a highly theoretical light, but it retains from this theoretical debate the rather simplistic notion that a subject which is not overtly present can be "recovered" (or identified) by means of verbal suffixes, a subject pronoun, or both. An example of the former is the Standard Italian verbal system, where subject pronouns are optional (*parlo* or *io parlo*) and, being stressed, are used for emphatic purposes; in the Standard French verb system, on the other hand, the unstressed subject pronoun (*je parle*, *tu parles* etc.) is obligatorily present and identifies the subject; an additional pronoun (*moi*, *je parle*) is used for stylistic or pragmatic emphasis.

The French system is in fact a partly mixed one: both the verbal suffix and the subject pronoun distinguish *je parle* from *nous parlons*. It nonetheless represents one distinct type, in that a subject pronoun is obligatory before all finite forms of the verb if there is no lexical subject (assuming that imperatives are deemed to be non-finite), whereas in Standard Italian they are optional with finite verbal forms:

...l'italiano (contrariamente al francese) dispone di desineze distinte per le singole forme verbali, il pronome personale risulta superfluo all'espressione delle persone. (Rohlf's 145)<sup>1</sup>

The intent of this study is to move away from relatively "pure" cases such as Standard French and Standard Italian, and to examine more "mixed" or transitional cases in which subject pronouns, either stressed or clitic, may be obligatory in all or part of the verbal paradigm. As Rohlf's (146) notes, in contrast to the situation in literary Italian and Southern dialects:

Ben diversamente stanno le cose nel Settentrione.... Nei dialetti moderni invece il pronome è divenuto quasi ovunque complemento obbligatorio della forma verbale. Ora compare soltanto nelle forme toniche (ven. *mi son*, *lu ga*), ora solo nella forma ridotta (mil. *a sont* 'io sono'), ora il verbo è preceduto da entrambe le forme, tonica e atona (ven. *ti ti gavarà* 'tu avrai').

It should however be noted that Standard French does not represent the most developed case of a subject system, since many of the Northern Italian dialects require pronouns in contexts where they need not, or indeed may not, appear in French. For example, while both Standard French and many dialects allow unstressed subject pronouns to be preceded by an emphatic pronoun (French *moi*, *je viens*, Piedmontese *mi i kantu*), Standard French does not permit a lexical subject followed by a subject pronoun, as do many Northern Italian dialects: Turinese *Mario a parla*, Trentino *el Mario el parla*, etc. (Bracco, Brandi and Cordin 195). In some Northern Italian dialects the subject pronoun in fact appears twice, once as a proclitic and once as an enclitic. This leads to a

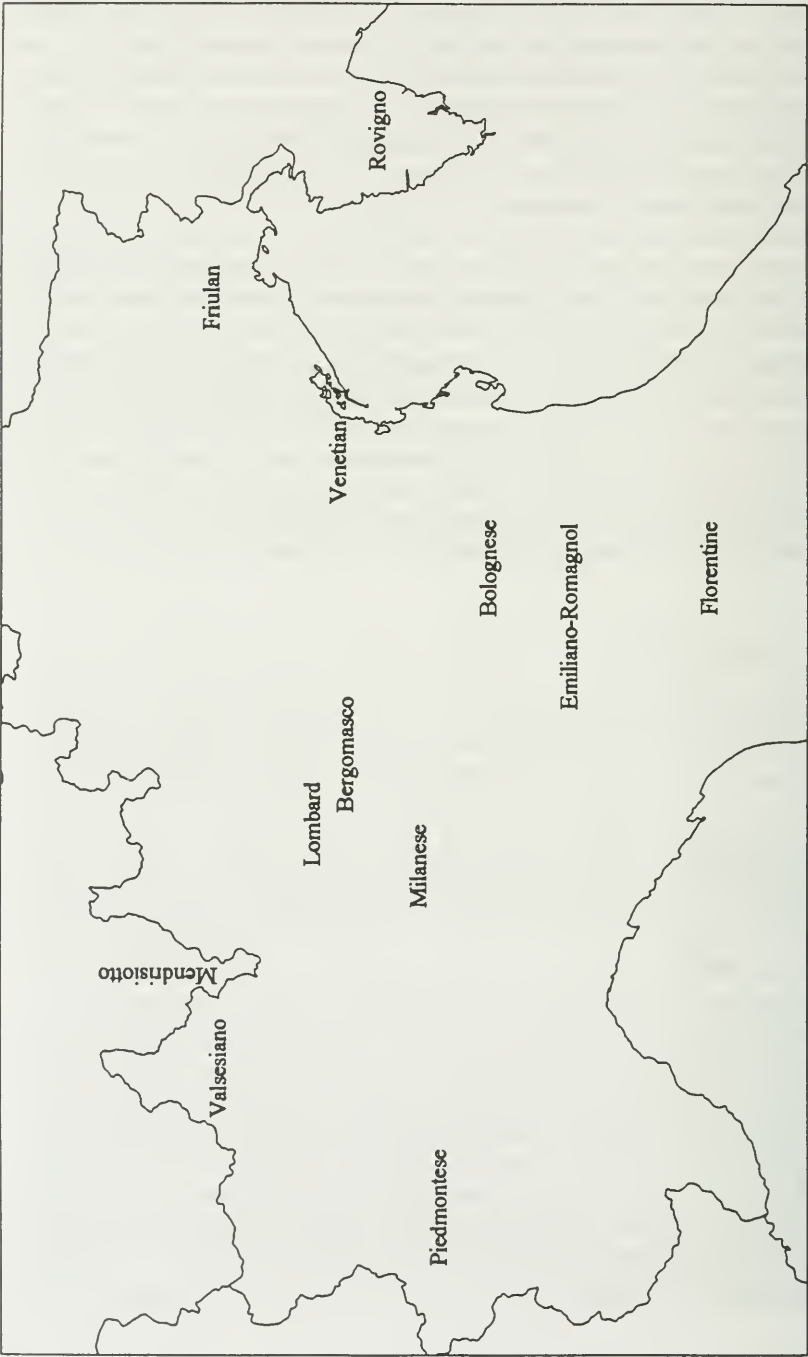


situation which can be described as pronoun tripling (e.g. Milanese *ti te parlet*, Nicoli 138, where the final *-t* has acquired the value of a verbal ending), where the enclitic has become an integral part of the verbal morphology (and not, as in varieties such as Friulian, only in interrogative and other inverted constructions), the proclitic subject is obligatory, and the stressed subject pronoun is added for emphasis. While subject doubling is characteristic of some varieties of French, such subject pronoun "tripling" does not seem to be found elsewhere in the Romance languages.

A brief note on terminology is in order at this point. A fairly wide variety of terms have been used in the descriptive dialectological literature to designate the forms which are of interest in this study, most often called simply *pronomi atoni* or *deholi*. One finds them called, for example, *particelle* (Griva, Mainoldi), *pronomi secondari* (Mora), *duplicazione pronominale* (Rossini), *accompagnaverbi* (Tonetti), *pronomi personali* pleonastici (Marchetti), and, perhaps most aptly, *pronomi personali verbali* (Brero and Bertodatti). While the terms "clitic" is of course itself ambiguous, since it can apply to object pronouns (direct and indirect) as well as to non-pronominal elements (such as negative particles and some adverbs), unless specified otherwise the term refers to subject clitic pronouns in the context of the present study.

## 1. Varieties Studied

In reality, the "pure" cases alluded to above (complete absence vs. presence of subject pronouns) do not correspond exactly to any geographical area: neither Standard French nor (especially) Standard Italian can be described as the dialect of a particular region, since neither is spoken naturally by any regional population. The varieties studied do, however, fall roughly between where these two idealized "poles" might be geographically deemed to be: the area in question is situated between the Italo-French border in the north-west, the Istrian peninsula in the east and Florence in the south. Note that this describes the area north of the famous La Spezia-Rimini line. In theory, any linguistic continuum can be considered almostly infinitely "smooth" when examined on a sufficiently fine scale. Such detail is not, however, always practical, and the first part of this study concentrates on some thirteen (sub-) varieties spanning the principal Northern Italian dialect groupings as outlined by Savi (10-11). More specifically, evidence is gathered on Piedmontese (Brero and Bertodatti, Aly-Belfadel, Griva 1980), Lombard (Massariello Merzagora), Mendrisiotto (Lurà),<sup>2</sup> Milanese (Nicoli), Cremonese (Rossini), Valselviano (Tonetti), Bergamasco (Mora), Veneto (Zamboni), Rovigno (Deanovic), Friulan (Frau), Bolognese (Mainoldi), Romagnolo (Pellicciardi) and Florentine (Renzi). These varieties are shown in Map I.



Map 1: Varieties studied.

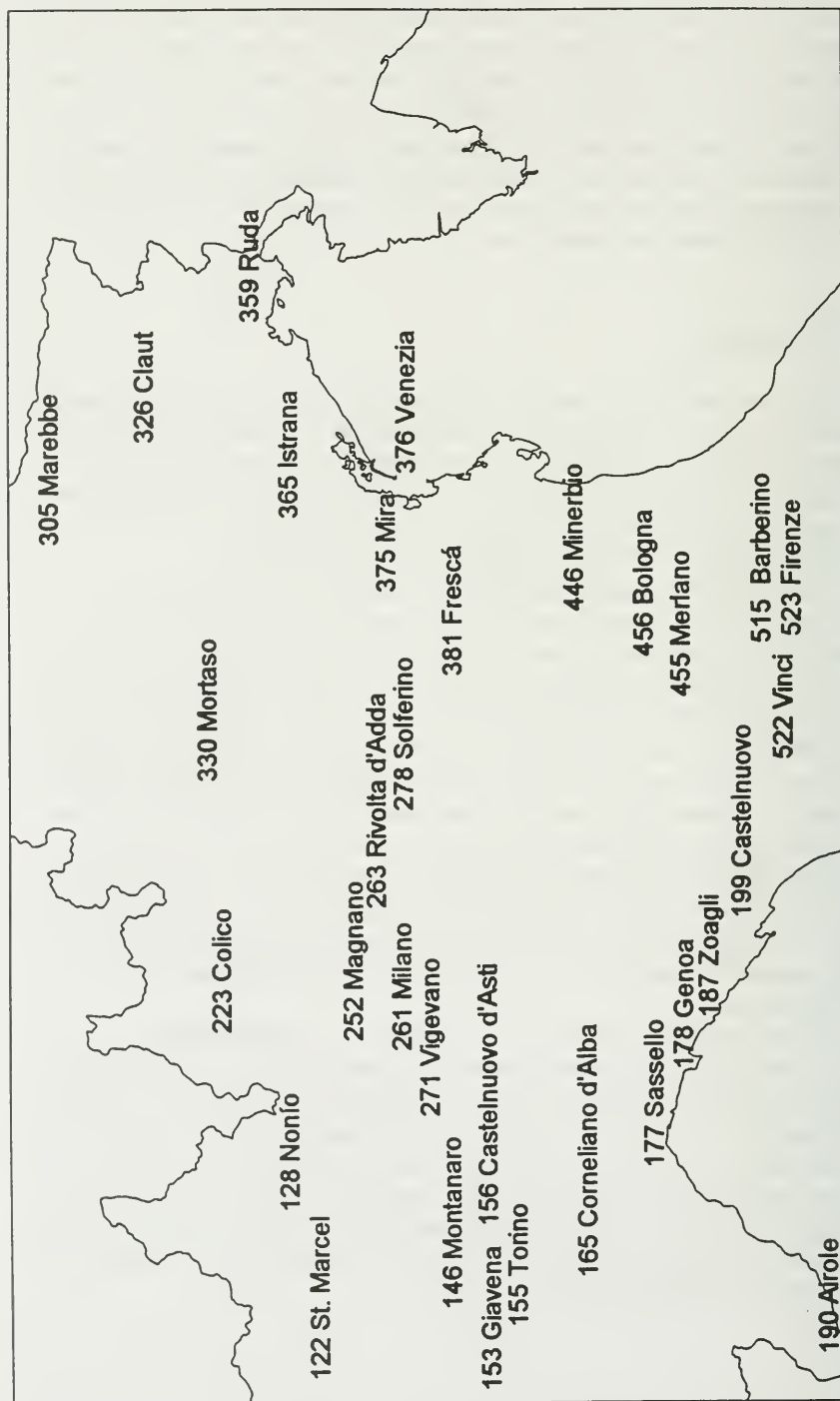
While some of these descriptive monographs on a dialect or group of dialects are very useful, they are on the whole highly variable in approach and consistency, and, at best leave many questions unanswered. There is also a lamentable lack of adequate descriptions for certain varieties (Ligurian, Trentino). For these reasons, the second part of this study focuses on a certain number of maps from Jaberg and Jud's *Sprach- und Sachatlas Italiens und der Südschweiz* (hereafter *AIS*), especially from volume 8), covering phrases or expressions with finite verbs, which were used as primary data to supplement the dialect descriptions cited above.

## 2. Methodology

Many of the more specific aspects to be studied in each dialect were inspired in part by the approach presented succinctly in Renzi and Vanelli, who formulate some interesting generalizations about the pronoun systems in some 30 dialects, but do not address the question of where these systems are situated geographically. Similar questions have of course been raised by other linguists, including Rohlfs (1966:46ff) and Bracco, Brandi and Cordin.

Since in all the varieties studied there are at least some subject pronouns, the first and most important question to be examined in each case is how many subject pronouns there are, and in which grammatical persons<sup>3</sup> of the verb they appear. It must be kept in mind, however, that the simple number of pronouns is not necessarily the most significant factor: it is also necessary to determine whether or not there is any neutralization between the pronoun forms for the various persons, that is, if any of the subject pronouns have the same form for different grammatical persons.<sup>4</sup> In these cases, the verbal endings may serve to disambiguate any neutralizations that may exist among the subject pronouns, just as conversely, the subject pronouns may help distinguish between identical verbal suffixes. It must be emphasized that, in any case, the actual phonetic form of the pronouns is of little consequence for this study: what is important is the pronominal paradigm, i.e. the number of grammatical persons which are distinguished.

Where possible, we will also determine the various linguistic contexts which may affect the occurrence (or non-occurrence) of subject pronouns. When they co-occur with nominal subjects, pronouns may be either preposed or postposed (i.e. NP + cl + V or NP + V + cl). Impersonal, meteorological, and existential verbs (as well as *avere*) may or may not take pronominal subjects, in contradistinction to other verbs. Finally, subject pronouns may or may not appear after quantifiers like *chi* and *nessuno*, and in negative, interrogative and inverted constructions; in this last case, the form of the enclitic will often differ from the form of the proclitic.



Map II: AIS points studied (# & name from Jaberg & Jud 1928:1).



While the choice of descriptive monographs is largely imposed by the availability of adequate studies, the same is not true for the choice of points from the *AIS*. Thus, for the second part of this study, a representative sampling of points was selected from among the dialect regions as outlined above (cf. Savi 80), but taking into account the dynamic between urban and rural points, as well as the probable role of the former as centres of linguistic diffusion into surrounding rural areas (Chambers and Trudgill 189ff). Thus six major cities were chosen (Turin, Milan, Venice, Bologna, Genoa, Florence), along with two or three points immediately around each of them and a number of points spread throughout each dialect region. In all, data were collected from a total of thirty-two points (shown in Map II) on thirty-eight *AIS* maps comprising a representative sample of finite verb forms in different grammatical persons and in different linguistic contexts.

As mentioned above, this study does not take into account the various phonetic forms that subject pronouns may take in each variety. Thus the fact that the second person occurs as [ta], [ɑ t], [t ɛ], [te], [ti], [t-], [-t], [it], [tu], [to], [ɑ d], [et], [ty] (and perhaps as other forms as well) is of less concern than the simple fact that the varieties in question have a second person pronoun. To put it differently, one expects a fair amount of (inter- and intra- dialectal) variation, both phonological and allomorphic) in any morphological system. This is all the more true given that clitics, being unstressed, are subject to somewhat irregular phonetic developments.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, the degree of morphological variation is so great that it becomes difficult at times to determine whether a given form is in fact a subject pronoun (as discussed below). For the sake of consistency, any unstressed form appearing before (or in some cases after) a finite verb and not corresponding to any other grammatical function was considered a subject pronoun. This may consist of as little as a consonant alone (e.g. [t-] or [l]) or as much as two unstressed syllables ([ara]). Note that any map with an Italian gloss which contains a subject pronoun is assumed to involve contrastive or stylistic stress, and is thus excluded (e.g. *AIS* maps # 1627 *Gli parlerei io*, #1629 *se tu lo trovassi*, etc.). The maps chosen are, in order by grammatical person:

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. 887, <i>ho messo</i>           | 2. 1016, <i>mangeresti?</i>           |
| 1519, <i>vorrei di questa qui</i> | 1539, <i>hai cucito bene</i>          |
| 1597, <i>non lo trovo</i>         | 1586, <i>perchè hai scelto...?</i>    |
| 1619, <i>sono tutto stordito</i>  |                                       |
| 1645, <i>sento un rumore</i>      | 4. 1604, <i>che corressimo sempre</i> |
| 1658, <i>non capisco</i>          | 1613, <i>lavoremmo di più</i>         |
| 1677, <i>ho i piedi bagnati</i>   | 1635, <i>abbiamo cercato</i>          |
|                                   | 1646, <i>siamo arrivati</i>           |

3. 363, *che tempo fa?*  
 366, *piove*  
 367, *è piovuto*  
 377, *nevica*  
 1532, *cuciva*  
 1534, *cantava sempre*  
 1549, *è sudicia*  
 1550, *c'è una macchia*  
 1594, *non vuol rimanere*  
 1602, *il nostro padrone è cattivo*  
 1603, *vorrebbe*  
 1605, *lui non corre mai*  
 1630, *non sarebbe contento*  
 1636, *è la terza volta*  
 1678, *questa donna non mi piace*
5. 1590, *che me dovete*  
 1595, *credete?*  
 1598, *siete venuta*  
 1599, *avete guadagnato*
6. 1555, *sono stracciati*  
 1558, *sono logorati*  
 1661, *faranno cio che voranno*  
 1667, *l'hanno cacciato*

### 3. Results and Interpretation

#### 3.1. General Survey

Table I shows the data gathered from the first part of the study, with descriptions covering some thirteen dialects. While some general features can be gleaned from such a survey, the combination of frustrating gaps in data and too much idiosyncratic information makes meaningful comparison between dialects next to impossible.

Table I

Variety	Number of Pronouns	Distinct Persons	Specific Usage Facts
Florentine	2	2	may follow lexical subject
Emiliano-Romagnol	6	4	[s] omitted with <i>avere</i> in 1, 4, 5
Bolognese	6	4	endings distinguish persons 1, 4, 5
Veneto	3	3	3 endings =6; s distinguish
Friulian	6	4	[s] omitted in certain cases
Rovigno	6	3 or 4	1=4=5, sometimes =6
Lombard	4	4	2, 5 enclitic in questions
Bergomasco	4	4	also 5 with <i>avere</i>
Cremonese	3	3	omitted after indefinites
Milanese	3	2	1, 4, 5, 6 optional
Piedmontese	6	3	1=4,5; 3=6, (ending all distinct)
Valsesiano	6	3	[s] distinguishes 2,5
Mendrisiotto	6	3 or 4	absent in impersonals; 6=1, 4, 5

Although rather sparse, these data already suggest some of the general trends which require fleshing out by further study. It should be clear that the system which distinguished the fewest persons occurs in Florentine, and that the number increases as we move north-west and north-east. The fact that two varieties are shown as distinguishing "3 or 4" persons is indicative of the sort of inherent variability which will be even more marked in the second part of this study.

### 3.2. AIS Maps

In a sense, one could have hoped that all the relevant information on verb forms, including subject pronouns, would be compiled in the "Tavole della conjugazione" toward the end of the AIS (8:1683ff). But in fact these tables are mainly concerned with verbal morphology *stricto sensu* (i.e. verb endings), and the subject pronouns are only given once, with the "sample verb" in *-are* (8:1683). Unfortunately, the verb chosen for the northern part of the Atlas is *lavarsi*, which complicates matters somewhat given that the emphatic subject pronoun and the reflexive pronoun are both present, and the subject (where it exists) may or may not be present. The more serious problem is, of course, that reducing all responses to one sample verb inevitably masks the inherent variability of the actual responses from each subject to each question.

The reality of geolinguistic questionnaires, however well-designed, is that they sometimes elicit responses that are not what was expected or intended. Thus in AIS maps #1604 and #1613, instead of the intended 4th person forms, we find normal spoken Tuscan equivalents (*si coresse*, *si lavorebbe*) at the three southernmost points. Furthermore, the one form which appears at each point on a linguistic atlas map does not, as a rule, inform us as to whether it is the only possible structure or one possibility among many, and in the latter case, exactly what the range of acceptable possibilities might be. Thus there are a number of pitfalls (beyond the simple recognition of subject forms) in tabulating the data from the AIS maps. There may be no data at a given point on a given map, or the subject may have responded using a totally different construction which does not include a subject. These cases were recorded as "no data" and were excluded from the calculation of results. Cases in which no subject pronoun appeared, or in which a stressed subject pronoun appeared, were recorded as "no", while all cases with an unstressed subject pronoun (regardless of its form or position) were counted as "pronoun". Since the goal was to discover where *s* are possible, multiple responses (as in the cases of some major cities) were counted as "pronoun" if at least one of the responses contained a subject pronoun.

The inherent variability of responses has the further result of restricting (or at least disguising) the "constant" usage of subject pronouns, even in varieties

which are recognized as having complete subject paradigms. Thus if we tabulate the responses for each map by grammatical person, we find that no point has 100% usage in all persons; in fact, the highest number of subject pronouns attained by this method of calculation is only a paradigm of three persons with completely consistent usage (second, third and fifth in the case of Giaveno, and second, third and sixth in the case of Calico).

This distribution, which is shown in Map III, combined with the fact that most of the cases with 100% usage fall in the second person, confirms Renzi and Vanelli's (143-44) first two generalizations:

1. Se una varietà fa un uso costane di almeno un pronome soggetto, questo è quello di 2. persona.
2. Se una varietà fa un uso costante di almeno due pronomi soggetto, questi sono quelli di 2. e 3. persona.

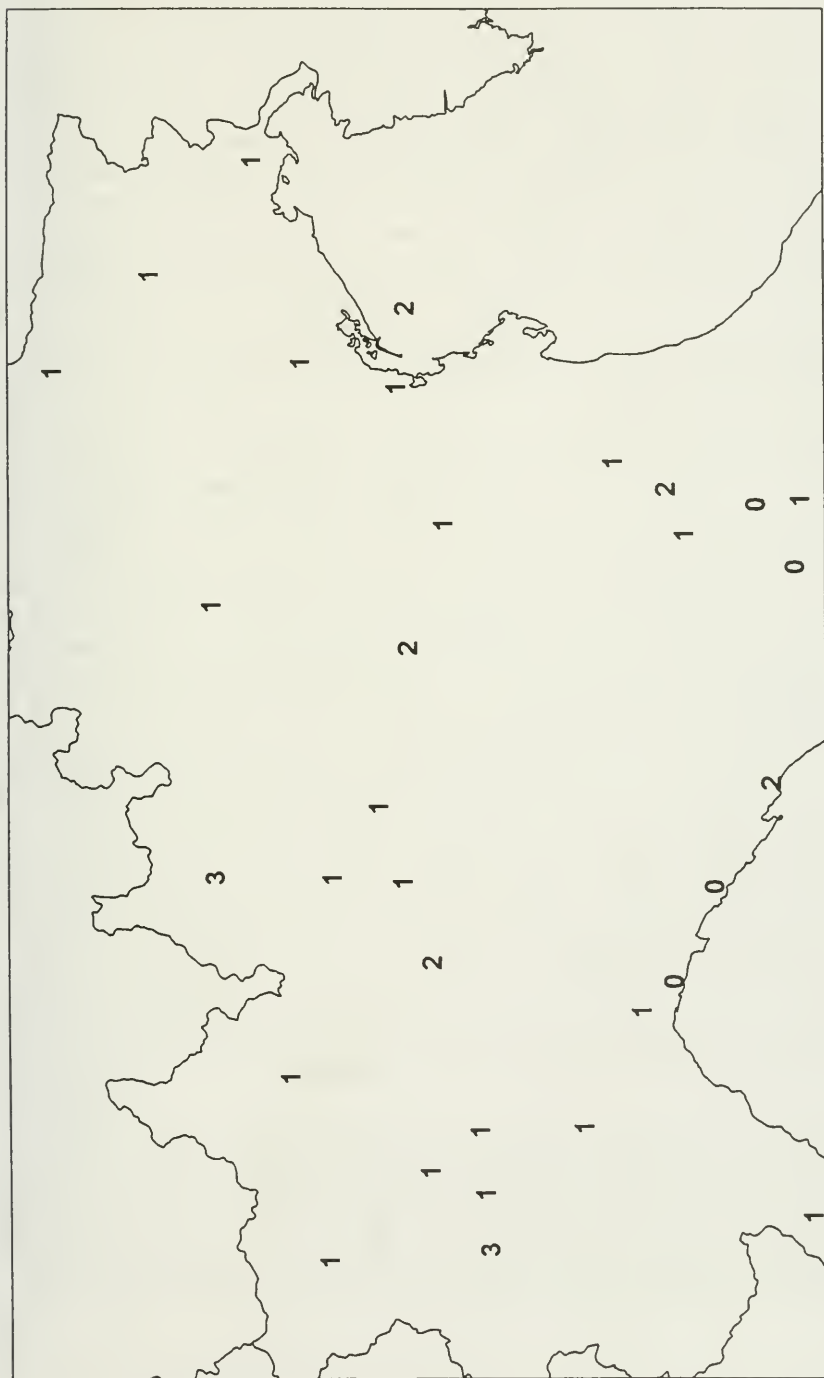
However, these same data do not support Renzi and Vanelli's next two generalizations (144):

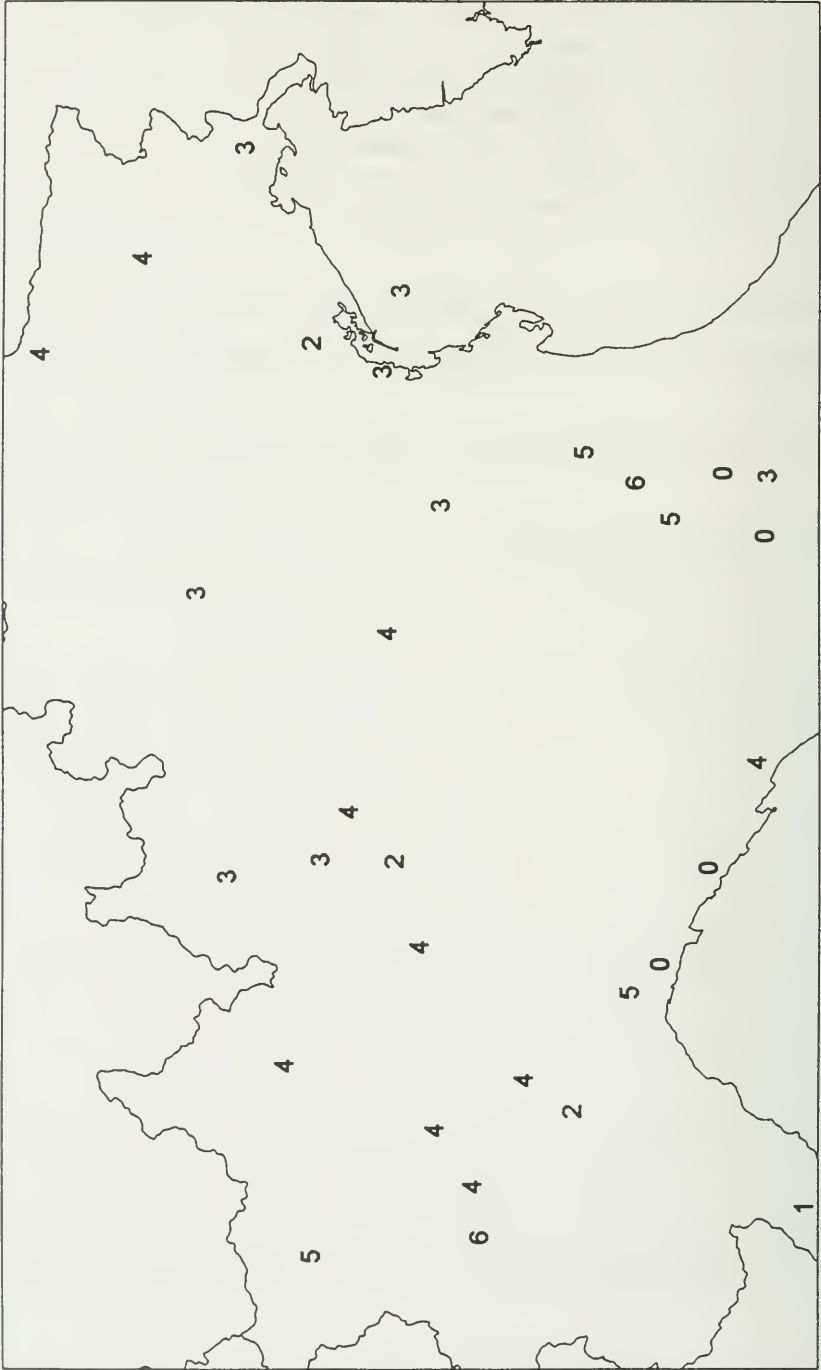
3. Se una varietà fa un uso costante di almeno tre pronomi soggetti, questi sono quelli di 2., 3., e 6. persona.
4. Se nella 2., 3. e 6. persona il pronome è presente, non può mai essere opzionale.

These two generalizations are further undermined if we tabulate those cases where half or more of the forms in question have a subject pronoun. This criterion of "near uniformity" better reflects the descriptive literature on these varieties, and gives us the geolinguistic pattern shown in Map IV.

The pattern which emerges from these data is one in which there are still two points where usage is most generalized: Giaveno and Bologna, with a majority of *s* in all six persons. These points are flanked by areas of fairly consistent subject pronoun usage (in 3 to 5 persons), corresponding *grosso modo* to the Emiliano-Romagnol and Piedmontese dialect zones. It should also be noted that the two areas where there is little or no subject pronoun usage (i.e. less than 50% in all 6 persons) are adjacent to these areas of high usage. While these abrupt transitions apparently contradict the general pattern of gradual transitions from one pronominal system to another, it must be remembered that geographical proximity does not necessarily reflect patterns of human activity and mobility. Thus Barberino and Vinci (the latter with only one occurrence of a subject) represent the Tuscan norm on which the Standard Italian system of optional strong subject pronouns is modeled. The absence of subject pronouns at Genoa and Zoagli is harder to explain, but it is evident that these coastal Ligurian communities have many more maritime links than nearby Sassello, which is more similar to its Piedmontese neighbours to the north.







Map IV: Number of Grammatical Persons showing 50% or more subject pronoun usage.

#### 4. Conclusions: Problems and Hypotheses for Further Research

It must of course be recognized that the present study is necessarily very preliminary in nature; it is more of an initial survey based only on those materials which were most readily accessible. In addition to linguistic descriptions, where they exist, consideration ought also to be given to literary texts, especially those of a popular or folk (as opposed to learned) register. As discussed below, this would be particularly useful in order to gain an idea of the historical evolution of this type of pronoun system. Finally, the use of more *AIS* points would have provided a denser pattern of data, thus giving a more sophisticated picture of just how these subject systems vary from one area to the next. We still need to discover more about how these different systems work. Not enough is known about the various contexts where *s* are permitted, optional, or required in the various dialects. The relevant contexts simply do not always appear in the *AIS* maps, nor are they covered by the descriptive literature. Consequently there is not enough data to determine definitively the status of subject pronouns after quantifiers like *chi* and *nessuno*, or with negation.

With these caveats in mind, it nonetheless seems that some interesting problems have been raised and some hypotheses can be advanced and/or confirmed. Major urban centres do seem to have some effect on surrounding areas, but the direction of their effect is somewhat ambiguous: Venice, Florence and Bologna have more subject pronouns than their immediate neighbours, while Milan and Turin have fewer. Furthermore, in Venice we find the order pronoun + neg., while in nearby Mira the order is neg. + pronoun; this comparison is further complicated by the fact that negation can be expressed either before the verb (of the type: *ne*) or after (of the type: *pas*) or both.

The systems studied here range from the typical Tuscan type (represented by Vinci) to a paradigm very reminiscent of the French one (at St. Marcel), with all the gradations in between. The fact that the spatial transition from one type of pronoun system to another is gradual lends support to the lexical diffusion hypothesis (cf. Wang). While this hypothesis usually deals with phonetic change in lexically "full" (or content) words, it seems intuitively plausible that change in grammatical status should also occur on an item-by-item basis throughout the lexicon. And indeed, the tentative results of this study seem to show that, at very least, there is no geographically abrupt shift from one system to another.<sup>6</sup>

This spatial continuum would suggest that the historical shift is also gradual rather than abrupt. The exact nature of the diachronic changes in question cannot, of course, be conclusively ascertained without a detailed study based on a historical corpus of more or less "oral" texts from one variety, something which is beyond the scope of this study. The synchronic geolinguistic data presented do, however, suggest a sort of "implied motion", reminiscent of the

famous Jakobsonian metaphor of a snapshot of a person walking down a street: immobile in itself, but capturing a moment out of a continuum of motion.

If this view of diachronic change in pronoun systems is correct, then it in turn has implications for the notion of parameters in a generative grammar. Gradual lexical diffusion of a change through a pronominal system is ultimately incompatible with the view of linguistic parameters as binary options which are "set" on the level of an abstract Universal Grammar, and hold throughout a given language variety. Such a view makes it difficult to conceive of a mixed paradigm (with some persons having subject pronouns and some not), and quite impossible to account for the spread of pronoun usage from one grammatical person to another, since the latter would seem to be exactly the sort of situation documented by the data in this study, we are forced to reassess our ideas about linguistic parameters (such as the "null subject parameter") and how they are set. Instead of parameters valid for a whole grammar, what we are faced by are parameters as features of individual lexical items, which are "set" on an atomistic, item-by-item basis (cf. Borer, Wexler and Manzini). Only in this way can we convincingly account for the type of variation this study documents both within and between varieties in the Northern Italian dialect continuum.

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## NOTES

- \* This is a revised version of a research paper completed in September, 1992, under the direction of Professor G.P. Clivio, for whose guidance and suggestions I am very grateful. Members of the Groupe de recherches en dialectologie comparative also made helpful suggestions and comments regarding earlier versions, as did Anna Moro and Jeff Tennant. This research has been partly funded by SSHRCC.
- 1 In a footnote, Rohlfs goes on to clarify that, in certain exceptional circumstances, subject pronouns are required in Standard Italian, for example to disambiguate cases where verbal endings are not distinct: *voglio che tu venga, voglio che lui venga, vuole che io venga*. Freedman examines some other cases where subject pronouns are used in Modern Standard Italian.
- 2 While actually spoken in Switzerland, the Mendrisiotto dialect is included since it forms part of the same linguistic continuum as the other varieties.
- 3 For the sake of clarity, grammatical persons are conventionally numbered 1 through 6 in this study (with persons 4 to 6 corresponding to those also called 1st, 2nd and 3rd person plural).
- 4 The term "neutralization" is used here in the sense of "syncretism", as defined by Jeffers and Lehisté (186): "Developments whereby grammatical distinctions are eliminated, either through phonetic change or through analogical processes." This is also clearly the sense in which Iliescu uses the term *synchrétisme*: "Dans le paradigme de la flexion verbale friulane, où le synchrétisme est un phénomène assez répandu, vu que dans un temps donné peuvent être identiques une, deux, ou même trois paires de formes verbales, le pronom atone en nominatif a commencé à assumer la fonction de morphème du verbe."
- 5 More specifically, the Piedmontese "particelle pronominali" *l'* and *j'*, which do not inflect for person and are only found with the verbs *avej* and some tenses of the 3P of *esse* (Brero and Bertodatti 75) are not taken into account here.



- 6 A detailed analysis based on more ample data from both Northern Italy and South-Central France appears in my doctoral thesis, *La variation grammaticale en géolinguistique: les pronoms sujet en roman central*.

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## Dante's Philosophical Canon (*Inferno* 4.130-44)

Amilcare A. Iannucci

Immediately after his encounter with the poets of the "bella scola" Dante, accompanied by his fellow sages, moves towards and enters the noble castle. Therein, seated on a vantage point high above a "meadow of green flowering plants," ("in prato di fresca verdura" [*Inf.* 4.111] Dante beholds the souls of the great-hearted ones ("li spiriti magni" [*Inf.* 4.119]) of antiquity who are arranged in groups. Celebrated first (*Inf.* 4.121-29) are those who achieved fame by lives of action, second (*Inf.* 4.130-44), those distinguished for their thought. Of special interest to us at the present is the second group for it represents Dante's canon of philosophical sources:

Poi ch'innalzai un poco più le ciglia,  
vidi 'l maestro di color che sanno  
seder tra filosofica famiglia.  
Tutti lo miran, tutti onor li fanno:  
quivi vid'io Socrate e Platone,  
che 'nnanzi a li altri più presso li stanno;  
Democrito che 'l mondo a caso pone,  
Diogenès, Anassagora e Tale,  
Empedoclès, Eraclito e Zenone;  
e vidi il buon accoglitor del quale,  
Diascoride dico; e vidi Orfeo,  
Tulio e Lino e Seneca morale;  
Euclide geomètra e Tolomeo  
Ipocràte, Avicenna e Galieno,  
Averois che 'l gran commento feo.

[When I had raised my eyes a little higher,  
I saw the master of the men who know,  
seated in philosophic family.  
There all look up to him, all do him honor:  
there I beheld Socrates and Plato,  
closest to him, in front of all the rest;  
Democritus, who ascribes the world to chance,  
Diogenes, Empedocles, and Zeno,

and Thales, Anaxagoras, Heraclitus:  
 I saw the good collector of medicinals,  
 I mean Dioscorides; and I saw Orpheus,  
 and Tully, Linus, moral Seneca;  
 and Euclid the geometer, and Ptolemy,  
 Hippocrates and Galen, Avicenna,  
 Averroës, of the great Commentary.] *Inf.* 4.130-44

Leaving aside those whose special talents lay in the applied and physical sciences, especially medicine, we are left with the following philosophers: Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Democritus, Diogenes, Empedocles, Zeno, Thales, Anaxagoras, Heraclitus, Cicero, Seneca, Avicenna and Averroes. Not all of these philosophers, however, are of equal importance to Dante's thought, and, as we shall presently see, the main sources of influence lie with the first and the last four above named thinkers.

Philosophically, Dante was influenced by Aristotle more than by any other philosopher. On the one hand, this is hardly surprising given that Dante's life occurred immediately after and during the period in which much of the wisdom of ancient Greece, especially that of Aristotle, reappeared anew through the intermediary influence of Arabic translations and confronted western Latin philosophy (cf. Nardi 166 ff.). On the other hand, what is surprising is both the depth and breadth of Dante's familiarity with Aristotle, an intellectual achievement described by Moore (94) as "astonishing." There seems to be few Aristotelian works with which Dante was unfamiliar (the *Poetics*, as Moore, 93, notes, seems to be an important exception) and Aristotle is quoted repeatedly throughout Dante's works as a philosophical authority who ranks supreme (cf. Placella and Simonelli). He is, as Dante says prosaically, "il maestro de li filosofi" (*Conv.* 4.8.15) or, according to the poetic depiction of *Inferno* 4.131, "il maestro di color che sanno" and his philosophical influence on Dante and his literary output reigns supreme. In fact, taking all of his writings together, Dante quotes or refers to Aristotle's works more than any other authoritative text save the Bible, and in the *Commedia* Aristotle is only surpassed by the Bible, Virgil and Ovid (cf. Moore's tables, 321 ff.).

Dante, of course, did not know Aristotle in the original Greek, but, as he himself tells us in the *Convivio* (2.14.7), used two Latin translations of Aristotle which he calls the "new" and the "old." Moore (307-18) traces the latter to the Arabic-into-Latin versions of Aristotle and the former to the Greek-into-Latin versions of Aristotle's works, now known as the "Antiqua Translatio." Armed with these translations Dante immersed himself completely in the Stagirite's works. In the *Commedia* the resultant influence of Aristotle on Dante is everywhere to be seen. Four examples will suffice. First is the distinction between sins of incontinence ("incontinenza") and sins of vicious habit ("malizia") which Dante makes in *Inferno* 11.82 and which he bases on the



same distinction in Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* (7.1.1145a) as he himself expressly admits in *Inferno* 11.80. Second is the odd collocation by Dante in the punishment of certain categories of sinners such as the suicides and the spendthrifts in *Inferno* 11.43-44 and the sodomites and the usurers in *Inferno* 11.49-51 which is to be traced to the influence of Aristotle (cf. *Nic. Eth.* 4.1.120a and *Phys.* 2.2. [194a21]). Third is Dante's awareness of the good for humankind of society (represented by the speech of Charles Martell in *Paradiso* 8.115-20), an awareness voiced by Aristotle in the *Politics* (1.1.2 as expressly acknowledged in *Paradiso* 8.120). Lastly, there is the long speech of Statius on the development of the embryo which occupies most of *Purgatorio* 25 and which mirrors Aristotle's theory of the same in his *Generation of Animals*. Not only is the vocabulary derivative but the entire presentation is closely modeled on Aristotelian ideas such as the underlying argument of the four digestions, the initial development of the soul which is similar to vegetative and animal life, and the importance of the heart for the life of the embryo.

Therefore front and center in Dante's philosophical thought stands Aristotle who as "magister sapientium" (*De. vulg. eloq.* 2.10.1) is "degnissimo di fede e d'obbedienza" (*Conv.* 4.6.7). Interestingly enough, this close relationship between Aristotle and Dante has served as the touchstone for dantean philosophical studies of the twentieth century. For the belief, held in the earlier part of the century and most notably associated with the scholars Cornoldi and Busnelli, which posited that Dante was in essence a Thomist and therefore also an Aristotelian, came under heavy fire in the mid-century by such scholars as Bruno Nardi. Nardi tried to situate Dante within a much more dynamic world of thought than the simple catchphrase "Thomist" or "Aristotelian" implied and sought to unravel the complex series of philosophical thought patterns at work in Dante's output. His important conclusion was that Dante's ideas are a mixture of neo-Platonic, Averroistic, Avicennistic elements so that they cannot be possibly traced to the sole influence of one particular source, Aristotle, or otherwise. Dante for Nardi, therefore, was essentially a neo-Platonist whose philosophical world is highly eclectic. More recently however, the pendulum has started to swing in reverse. For, as Kenelm Foster points out, although there is not much to be said for calling Dante a Thomist/Aristotelian, and although there are clear signs of neo-Platonic influence in Dante's thought, nevertheless, Aristotle is not to be forgotten. As he concludes, Dante's world when "analysed philosophically [...] turns out to be a rather uneasy synthesis of Neoplatonist and Aristotelian elements" (57). And most recently in an engaging study of Dante and Christian Aristotelianism Patrick Boyde has explored the processes of "creation" and "generation" as Dante knew them and shows how Dante has fused them in his theory of human embryology. In this endeavor Boyde emphasizes the primary importance of Aristotle who is not only regarded as "the master of human life," precisely because he had shown us the goal of our exist-

ence" (294) but who also is responsible for driving Dante in his last years to elaborate the two ends, the earthly and the heavenly, and hence, the two natures of humans which are the consequences of mankind's two efficient causes, generation and creation, the former supplied by Aristotle, the latter by Christianity (294-95). Therefore, although neo-Platonic influences are everywhere to be seen in Dante (cf. below), they in no way downplay the pivotal importance that Aristotle played in Dante's conception of the universe and of humankind's place in it.

Grouped next to Aristotle, but possessing far less philosophical significance for Dante's thought, are Socrates and Plato, the precursor and the founder of the Academy, respectively. Socrates (cf. Delhaye), of course, was the teacher of Plato as Dante was well aware, but he seems to be afforded his privileged place in Limbo (next to Aristotle and in front of all the rest) because, as Dante remarks in the *Convivio* (3.14.8), he is representative of those who have subjugated all other human pleasures to the pursuit of ideas. But this singular honor aside, Socrates is treated in brief and fragmentary manner in Dante's works, being seen merely as the precursor or as the one who inaugurated that search for moral truth which was perfected and found its fullest expression in the genius of Aristotle (cf. *Conv.* 4.6.15) who is regarded by Dante as "maestro e duca de la ragione umana" (*Conv.* 4.6.8). Socrates is thus cast into the shadows by Dante, who notes that Socrates, "because of the absence of affirmative statements in his philosophy" (*Conv.* 4.6.14) did not even leave his name to his followers. In similar manner, Plato is treated by Dante most summarily (cf. Cristiani; Moore 156-64). He is noted in the *Convivio* as the friend of Aristotle and as the founder of the Academy (*Conv.* 3.14.8 and 4.6.14). And in two other passages of the same work Dante relies on more legendary evidence to add that Plato was the son of a king (*Conv.* 3.14.8) and that his life span of eighty years is a perfect embodiment of the natural existence of human beings (*Conv.* 4.24.6). But of Plato's works Dante, like his contemporaries, seems to have had limited knowledge, relying almost exclusively on a Latin translation and commentary of the *Timaeus* by Chalcidius of the late fifth century. Moreover, with respect to this work Dante seems to be decidedly negative in the *Commedia*. For in *Purgatorio* 4.1-16 Dante attacks the "error" (*Purg.* 4.5) of Plato whom Dante held in the *Timaeus* to believe in the plurality of souls, a belief refuted by Aristotle in the *De anima* 3.9. Furthermore, in *Paradiso* 4.22 ff. the pilgrim's seeing the souls of Piccarda and Costanza within the moon raises a doubt whether the belief expressed by Plato in the *Timaeus* that the creator of the universe had assigned the souls to stars and that they, at death, returned to their originating star, might be true. This belief is then vehemently attacked by Beatrice who points out that all souls, in reality, inhabit the Empyrean and that they appear to Dante in the different spheres only to demonstrate for his mortal eyes the degrees of their beatitude. Beatrice, in fact, intensifies her attack on

this Platonic doctrine by calling it "insidious" (*Par.* 4.27) precisely because it suggests an overpowering influence of the stars on human actions and therefore threatens the critical dantean doctrine of free will (cf. *Purg.* 16.67-81). Thus, while allowing himself the use of a Platonic construct to stage the appearance of souls throughout the heavens, Dante resolutely denies the underlying doctrine. Dante, in fact, seems almost anti-Platonic in the *Commedia* and there is none of the celebration of Platonic ideas for their affinity with Christianity, a belief particularly dear to Augustine (cf. *De. civ. dei* 8.5.8 and 10).

For Dante, however, as for medieval culture in general, Platonism was not limited to Plato proper, but was an odd combination of many elements including Aristotelian, Platonic, neo-Platonic, Averroistic and Avicennistic ideas (cf. Nardi; Gilson). For Dante's times can be defined in a single word: a meeting place, not only between eastern and western philosophy, but also between ancients and moderns and between these and everything that lay between. Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Porphyry, Augustine, Avicenna, Averroes, all of these are subsumed under the banner heading of Platonism, all were available to Dante either directly or through various intermediaries and all contributed to the shaping of his thought. Many ideas in Dante are thus not direct borrowings from Plato but from neo-Platonic elements, as Nardi has argued, ideas such as the role of the angels in the formation of the sublunary world (cf. Nardi 245-50), human nature as a creation to restore the ruin of the fallen angels (250-53), and creation of the sensible world (253-62). Moreover, the influence of the last two philosophers listed in *Inferno* 4, namely, the Arabs Avicenna and Averroes, appears to have been substantial, as Nardi (209 ff.) and others have shown (cf. Gilson 257 ff.; Giacon; Vasoli). Thus, Dante's view (*Conv.* 4.21) of the soul's three resident things or virtues ("la virtù formativa," "la virtù celestiale," and "la virtù del motore del cielo") and, especially, his treatment of the role of "la virtù celestiale" (the influence of the heavenly bodies) as the active principle in the soul's passage from potency to act, offers not only clear references to Aristotle and neo-Platonism but also to Avicenna and Averroes (cf. Nardi 209-223). Moreover, Dante's doubt expressed in the *Convivio* (4.1.8) whether the primal matter of the elements was contained within God, a doubt which lingers into the *Commedia* (cf. *Par.* 29.22-24), reflects the view held by Avicenna in his *Metaphysics* (*Summa theologiae* 1, q. 15, a. 3, ad. 3; cf. Nardi 248-53) while Dante's theory of a possible intellect, unique and separated for humankind, is directly inspired by Averroes as he expressly tells us in the *De Monarchia* (1.3.9). The Arabs, therefore, represent for Dante the new or modern learning (signified by their placement which occurs last in the list and parallels the placement of the contemporary Saladin in the preceding list of great-hearted individuals of action) at its best and they contribute in a major way to Dante's philosophical thought. In sum, Dante's Platonism includes a broad spectrum of philosophical thought which results from a synthesis of many disparate ele-



ments. It is precisely this synthesis which confers on Dante's work its twin characteristics of the vibrant and dynamic interlocking of ideas and of the seemingly intellectually impenetrable world that such an interlocking provides.

Next to Aristotle, it is Cicero who exercises the greatest influence on Dante's philosophical thought (cf. Moore 258-73; Ronconi). Surprisingly, it is not as a supreme orator but as a philosopher that Cicero is retrieved and presented by Dante. Of Cicero's rhetorical works Dante seems scarcely aware (cf. Moore 258 ff.) and Cicero is explicitly absent from the catalogue of writers listed by Dante in the *De vulgari eloquentia* (2.6.7) as being masters of the high prosaic style ("qui usi sunt altissimas prosas"). Cicero's philosophical works, however, are quoted extensively in Dante's works, more than half of the Ciceronian citations coming from the *De officiis* or the *De senectute*, after which rank in importance the *De amicitia* and *De finibus* (cf. Moore 258). Dante has a special affection for Cicero, referring to him in *Inferno* 4 and elsewhere as "Tully," and in the *Convivio* (2.12.3) Dante lays bare the formative influence that Cicero played in his philosophical growth for it was a reading of Boethius' *De consolazione philosophiae* coupled with Cicero's *De amicitia* that consoled Dante after Beatrice's death and that led him to the study of philosophy. It was thus the influence of this work that caused Dante eventually to imagine philosophy as "una donna gentile," a lady of compassion and a great thing (*Conv.* 2.12.6). Moreover, it was also from this work that Dante borrowed his understanding of love as a meeting of equally virtuous souls and as an end in itself (cf. De Robertis 21 ff. and 93 ff.) and used that understanding to fashion his Christian understanding of caritas, expressed both in the *Vita nuova* (18) and the *Commedia* (*Inf.* 2.72) as a turning towards the beloved in an act of selflessness, an act which is transhumanizing and which confers ultimate meaning and joy on one's life (cf. Ronconi 992).

In the *Commedia* Cicero's influence is in evidence on a number of fronts, although he is never expressly acknowledged. First among these is Dante's distinction between sins of violence and sins of fraud (*Inf.* 11.22 ff.) which accords closely with Cicero's similar distinction between the same vices in the *De officiis* (cf. Moore 259). In addition, while there is no actual quotation, Dante's depiction in *Purgatorio* 19.22 of the Sirens as having turned Ulysses aside, may be due to his reading of Cicero's *De officiis* 5.18.49, where Cicero implies that Ulysses had been trapped by the Sirens and traces this entrapment to a desire for knowledge, a fact in perfect conformity with Dante's depiction of Ulysses in *Inferno* 26.97-99 and 112-20. Finally, Dante was not only influenced by the general tone of Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* (which he probably knew through Macrobius' commentary, *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis*) and its mid-life vision but he also probably used it as one of the models for the Cacciaguida episode which spans the central cantos of the *Paradiso*. For, as



Guy Raffa (121 ff.) has argued, Dante displays in the episode a subtle pattern of numerical echoes of the *Somnium Scipionis* whereby Scipio the Elder's prophecy to his grandson that he will be called upon to defend the state "when his life has completed seven solar revolutions eight times" is picked up by Dante (most interested in the product of the two numbers, namely, 56) and used by him not only to stage the location and the length of the Cacciaguida encounter (the fifth sphere and five hundred and fifty lines), but also to date his principal character of Cacciaguida who lived fifty-six years, the same age at which Scipio the Elder prophesies his grandson's tragic fate in the *Somnium*.

In addition to these borrowings Dante seems to have used Cicero as his meeting point with many other philosophers of the past, especially those Greeks listed in *Inferno* 4 who were little more than names to Dante and who played a minimal, if any, role in Dante's thought. Thus, the Greek Atomist Democritus in *Inferno* 4 is given the epithet "che 'l mondo a caso pone," and this evaluation whereby Democritus is said to have traced the world's origin to chance would seem to echo Cicero's mention of Democritus' theory of creation in *De natura deorum* (1.24.66). But whereas the philosophical tradition often joins Democritus with Epicurus as those who reject providence, its role in creation and the immortality of the soul, Dante expressly separates the two and places Democritus in Limbo whereas he reserves the sixth circle of Hell to house the heretical souls of Epicurus and his followers (*Inf.* 10.13-15), all of whom are condemned for their denial of the immortality of the human soul. The name of Diogenes, most likely, Diogenes the Cynic, was also probably suggested to Dante by Cicero who styled him as "durior Diogenes [...] ut Cynicus asperius" (*Tusc. disp.* 1.43.104) and who described the ancient sage as one who viewed wisdom as a dirty cloak shunned alike by riches and desire (*Tusc. disp.* 3.23.56) and who was as indifferent to death as he was to burial (*Tusc. disp.* 1.43.104). Diogenes, therefore, is a paragon of the pursuit of thought and, as such, an ideal candidate for inclusion among the other sages of Limbo. Empedocles and Heraclitus are grouped together by Aristotle in the *Nichomachean Ethics* (8.1.1155b) and it was either from this source or from Cicero's numerous allusions to them (cf. for Empedocles, *Academica*, 1.12.44; 2.5.14; 2.23.74; *De nat. de.* 1.12.29; 1.33.93; for Heraclitus, *Academica*, 2.37.118; *Tusc. disp.* 5.36.105; *De fin.* 2.5.15; *De nat. de.* 3.14.35) that Dante's knowledge of them was gained. Of Zeno of Citium Dante makes greater mention than his fellow Greeks, noting in the *Convivio* (4.6.9) that he was the first and most important of the ancient philosophers ("primo e prencipe"), and the founder of the Stoic school and contrasting his opinions with the true opinion of Aristotle (*Conv.* 4.22.4). He is also included by Dante as being among those who sacrificed their lives for ideas (*Conv.* 3.14.8). Zeno thus stands at the beginning of a philosophical tradition which Dante knew as "Stoic" and which he contrasts (*Conv.* 4.22.15) with the two other schools of

ancient thought, namely "Epicurean" and "Peripatetic" (beginning with Socrates and Plato and culminating in Aristotle). This Stoic tradition consists for Dante (*Conv.* 4.6.9) in a life of strict integrity "unreservedly following truth and justice, in not showing sorrow for anything or joy for anything, in not being responsive to any emotion" ("la verità e la giustizia seguire, di nulla mostrare dolore, di nulla mostrare allegrezza, di nulla passione avere sentore"). Both Dante's portrayal of Zeno and his understanding of the "Stoic" school are traceable to Cicero who describes Zeno as "inventor et princeps Stoicorum" (*Tusc. disp.* 2.42.131) and who discusses "Stoic" philosophy in many passages which present "Stoic" doctrine in a manner very similar to Dante (cf. *Academica* 2.42; *De fin.* 8.28; *De fin.* 31.71; *Tusc. disp.* 5.25.44; 4.17.37). As for Thales, Dante seems to have been unaware of his reputation, even recorded in Cicero (*Acad.* 2.37.118) as being chief among the seven ancient sages, and in the *Convivio* he omits his name as among the seven ancient wise men. However, this may be due to a false or corrupt reading of Augustine (cf. *Stabile* 513), and the fact that he is placed among a group of philosophers (Democritus to Heraclitus) who sought to find some underlying universal principle to account for creation is perfectly in accord with Cicero's overview of early philosophy at the beginning of the *Academic questions*. Anaxagoras, the friend and teacher of Euripides and Pericles, is portrayed by Cicero as being indifferent to wealth, as having surrendered his inheritance to his relatives (*Tusc. disp.* 5.39.115) and as having accepted with serenity the death of his son (*Tusc. disp.* 3.14.30). It is, undoubtedly, this picture of Anaxagoras as the champion of the contemplative life which is responsible for Dante's placement of him in Limbo.

As it is not Cicero the orator but Cicero the philosopher that influences Dante, so too it is Seneca the philosopher ("Seneca morale") and not Seneca the tragedian that is recalled by Dante in *Inferno* 4 (cf. Paratore; Verbeke). Seneca prefigures in Dante's list (*Conv.* 3.14.8) of those who have sacrificed their lives for knowledge and he, along with Numa Pompilius, is described as "illustrious" ("illustre") because of example or teaching (*De vulg. eloq.* 1.17.2). Thus, Seneca, both by virtue of his epithet of "morale" and Dante's prose references to him, stands out for the poet as an *exemplum* of those concerned with moral truth and as a continuator, in Latin, of what Dante considered to be the hallmark of Greek speculative thought, namely, the science of morality. In the *Commedia* there are only slight traces of Seneca. Seneca's description of Alexander of Pherae as "latro gentiumque vastator" ("robber and devastator of nations," *De beneficiis* 1.13.3) may argue for the latter's identification as the person intended in *Inferno* 12.107. More certain is that Seneca's description of Ulysses's voyage as "extra notum nobis orbem," ("beyond the world known to us," *Epistolae morales* 88.6) and of the hero's placement among those "sapientes laboribus et contemptores voluptatis et victores

omnium terrarum" ("who are wise for their labors, contemptuous of pleasure and victors over all the earth," *De constantia sapientis* 2.1) contributed to Dante's account of the Homeric figure. Finally, although commentators draw attention to the Virgilian influence (*Aen.* 6.470-71 and 10.693 ff.) for the admonition in *Purgatorio* 5.14-15 to the pilgrim to persevere and "stand like a sturdy tower that does not shake/its summit though the winds may blast" ("sta come torre ferma, che non crolla / già mai la cima per soffrar di venti") it may well be that this is a rendering of Seneca's "quemadmodum proiectedi quidam in altum scopuli mare frangunt [...] ita sapientis animus solidus est" ("as projecting crags are not affected by the beating of the deep sea, so too the soul of the wise man is ever constant," *De constantia sapientis* 3.5).

Thus does Dante lay bare his canon of preferred philosophical *fontes* in *Inferno* 4. But by staging his encounter with them within the noble castle in Limbo Dante is also revealing not only his attitude towards pagan knowledge in general, but also, and more importantly, the difference in attitude between the author of the *Convivio* and the author of *Commedia*. For all of these philosophers, like the pagan poets before them, are condemned to a "life of hopeless longing" in Limbo and whereas Dante acknowledges, even praises, their contributions to rational thought by constructing the noble castle for them, he also locates that noble castle in Limbo, therefore, far removed from the true destiny of humankind. Thus Dante's philosophers while representing value do not represent true value for their words are not imbued with the Word of God. As a result, they are condemned precisely because they lived before the time of Christ and did not come to believe in him. It is because of this great deficiency of theirs that Dante in the *Commedia* revisits his earlier flirtation with the "donna gentile" of Philosophy of the *Convivio*. Now, everything is focused on following the true path and anything not supportive of that true path is seen to be wanting. It is precisely for this reason that Beatrice blames the pilgrim in *Purgatorio* 31.37 ff., namely, that at her death he was distracted not only by other women but also, and more insidiously, by mistress philosophy. Distraction, therefore, with anything not germane to the truth is to be shunned. Thus the poet of the *Commedia* realizes and acknowledges his earlier stumbling. Dante's attitude towards philosophy in the *Commedia*, therefore, is a revision of his earlier attitude expressed in the *Convivio* and such a revision highlights perfectly the complex relationship between both works. For more than a simple continuation of his earlier literary efforts and more than a simple *palinode*, the *Commedia* represents a total rethinking and a total reworking of previously held ideas and views, all of which are now judged by the light of faith. As a result, the pagan learning so celebrated for its own sake in the *Convivio* now is seen in the *Commedia* as leading to nothing more than a life of "fruitless longing" (cf. *Purg.* 3.40-45) on the part of those who had espoused it.

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# The Dialect Poetry of Giacomo Noventa\*

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Giacomo Noventa composed most of his poetry in Venetian dialect in the first decades of the twentieth century and is considered by critics a representative of the dialect poetry of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> If his contemporaries were almost indifferent to Noventa as a poet and intellectual, even in more recent times, his poetry does not find appreciation by a vast audience and is virtually unknown to English language scholarship. Noventa deserves consideration, not only for his fine poetry and clever politico-philosophical essays, but also for his polemical stand in the debate on contemporary culture.<sup>2</sup>

In this paper I shall first give a brief biographical profile of Giacomo Noventa, then focus on those poems that comment on his choice of *dialetto* and illustrate his poetic discourse of reaction against *poesia nuova*. His resolution to utilize the dialect was the *conditio sine qua non* for poetic creation, but his choice of the vernacular as a vehicle for traditional moral values contributed to his exclusion from the official cultural debate of his time. The dialect therefore becomes the centre of a paradox: it is the only language which Noventa considers apt to express his poetic vision, without resorting to the rhetorical tones of the fascist propaganda dominant when he was composing his poetry; but it also confines his message to a limited audience, thereby contributing to Noventa's marginality in the twentieth-century cultural scene. With this article I intend to pay a tribute to a fine contemporary poet, who deserves better recognition in North American scholarship.<sup>3</sup>

In their introduction to the anthology *Le parole di legno*, Mario Chiesa and Giovanni Tesio distinguish between "poesia dialettale" and "poesia in dialetto." "Poesia dialettale" proposes folkloristic, regional or burlesque themes, whereas "poesia in dialetto" belongs to a high and illustrious literary genre in which the dialect is used as a form of poetic language. According to Chiesa and Tesio: "Nel Novecento si potrà parlare solo [...] di poesia in dialetto. Volendo significare con ciò che si tratta di una poesia che, nella ricerca di un linguaggio, lo trova nel dialetto" (12).<sup>4</sup> In Giacomo Noventa, as in most *dialettali* of the twentieth century, dialect poetry is essentially "poesia in dialetto" because dialect to him is primarily a poetic language and his work is never folkloristic or burlesque. He operates a series of modifications to the existing Venetian dia-

lect which make it his own personal language. Noventa's work is not all in dialect: a few of his verses and all his essays were written in Italian. The exclusive use of the vernacular for his poetic *corpus* deserves special consideration, the poet himself discusses the problem of dialect and poetry in some meta-linguistic poems. Noventa's conversion to the dialect is a direct consequence of his biographical, poetical, and politico-philosophical motivations.

Biographical elements played a significant role on Noventa's poetic agenda. Giacomo Ca' Zorzi was born in 1898 to a rich patrician family in Noventa di Piave, a small village north of Venice. The choice of the toponym Noventa for his *nom de plume* reveals his deep attachment to his land of origin and its vernacular. Ca' Zorzi's life was marked by a series of peculiar political and literary experiences caused by his rebellious and unconventional spirit. His aristocratic and Catholic upbringing was coupled with a broad cultural background and an exceptional openness to other European literatures.<sup>5</sup> His extensive travel around Europe enabled him to depart from fascist Italy where, on various occasions, he was detained and arrested for not conforming to the regime. Noventa graduated in philosophy from the university of Turin in 1923 with a dissertation that strongly criticized the fascist form of government.<sup>6</sup> The years spent in Turin were fundamental for the development of his literary friendship with Giacomo Debenedetti and Mario Soldati; he was also in touch with the most authoritative voices of contemporary culture: he frequented the group of Piero Gobetti, he met Eugenio Montale and Umberto Saba. Despite his acquaintance and dialogue with the *poeti nuovi*, Noventa played a marginal role on the poetry of the twentieth century and was ignored or criticized for the regressiveness and "inattualità" of his poetry and thought.<sup>7</sup> Mengaldo, who includes him in his anthology, underscores the image of Noventa as an isolated figure, whose ideas are at variance with the main twentieth-century poetic tendencies.<sup>8</sup> Noventa seems destined to remain on the fringe because of his unconventional and controversial approach towards official culture. Although his critical and reformist views targeted the intellectuals of his time, his verses are not easily situated in the contemporary literary scene. In his "Prefazione" to *Versi e poesie*, Manfriani notes that Noventa has no place in a specific literary group, and that he has been marginalised by critics who mistook the moral and civil commitment of his verses for reactionism. In times of ideology crisis, Manfriani sees an opportunity to re-evaluate Noventa's poetry and philosophical thought as an important contribution to recent cultural history (xiii-xiv). For Manfriani, Noventa was ahead of his times, and his insights and philosophical complexity urged him to take a contrasting position towards the idealistic philosophical tradition. Croce's idealism was still a strong influence for the *poesia nuova* of the twentieth century and this, according to Noventa, was the weakness of modern culture.<sup>9</sup> According to Manfriani's paraphrase, Noventa aspired to be the critical conscience of Italian culture, and his desire for reform was expressed not only in his poetic activity (that dated mostly from the

1930's), but also in his philosophical works, which developed more fully his reformist ideas on Italian modern culture. His theoretical essays appeared in *La riforma letteraria*, the journal that he co-founded in Florence with Alberto Carocci in 1936.<sup>10</sup> The final version of his essays was published only in 1960 (the year of his death) in a book entitled *Nulla di nuovo*.<sup>11</sup> According to Noventa any revision of Italian cultural thought must reject the idealistic philosophy, which was still influential on poets like Montale, Ungaretti, Saba, and the Ermetici. Noventa, who believed in Catholic reform, was convinced that the main fault of modern thought lay in the excessive subjectivism of the idealistic philosophy. Noventa's revival of a highly original and personal form of Catholicism was closely linked with his aversion to De Sanctis's and Croce's criticism. Ca' Zorzi thought that European culture was fundamentally unitarian and that it derived from Medieval Catholic universalism, as shown in Dante. A reform of Italian and European culture would be possible only when the mistakes of the Protestant religion, and of idealism as its latest derivation, were corrected and Catholic universalism could be embraced again. To the idealistic subjectivism of modern poetry, Noventa opposed a revival of universal and objective moral values.<sup>12</sup>

Most of Noventa's poetry was published in a complete form only in 1956, even though it belongs to his earlier years, whereas his philosophical essays were written in his mature years. Noventa's participation in political life covers the years from 1940 to 1954. In politics, as in poetry, Noventa assumed a position of extreme independence.<sup>13</sup> After the war he was close to the Partito Liberale and he founded a newspaper (*La gazzetta del Nord*, 1946-47), in which he defined himself as a "cattolico liberale." In 1947, however, he contributed in Turin to the Socialist journals *Mondo Nuovo* and *L'Italia socialista*.<sup>14</sup> As electoral candidate for the party *Unità popolare*, he proposed political ideas which attempted to reconcile socialism, liberalism and patriotism. Since his ideas did not find any support, Noventa decided to give up active political participation in 1954. Noventa was awarded the Premio Viareggio for poetry in 1956 and died in 1960.

Ca' Zorzi composed most of his poetry during the fascist period. His decision to use the dialect, a language different from that of the official culture, derived from his strong belief that the poetic language commonly used by his contemporaries was tainted from a literary and ideological point of view. Writing in Italian at that time, meant using the high-sounding language of the regime, which had turned ideals into something false and corrupt. The other available alternative was the enigmatic language of *Ermetismo*, but Noventa did not subscribe to it. Instead, he proceeded to invent his own poetic medium: *Venessian*. Noventa's vernacular was the most suitable expressive tool to safeguard poetry from any possible complicity with the cultural establishment, and, at the same time, it was distinct from *Ermetismo*. Noventa, who was close to the tradition of the European Romantics (Goethe and Heine in particular),

strove to produce poetry still capable of affirming authentic values, as simple, and yet symbolically charged as the taste of bread and the light of the sky ("El saòr del pan, e la luse del ciel" [*Opere* 1.44]); but he did not want his message to be mistaken for propaganda. His polemic stand against contemporary poets Montale, Ungaretti and Saba (unified under the name "trio") originated from their acceptance of the failure of modern poetry; the modern poet could not bring positive beliefs any more, he could only state the limits of poetry and define himself by negation. Montale in *Ossi di seppia* stated that poets offered just "qualche storta sillaba e secca come un ramo;" their verses were not meant to express the traditional values of the great poetry of all times, such as love, honour and friendship; modern poets were confined to the realm of subjectivism and disavowal: "codesto solo oggi possiamo dirti, / ciò che *non* siamo, ciò che *non* vogliamo" ("Non chiederci la parola," *Tutte le poesie* 29).

Noventa was in search of an alternative to the language and themes of modern and hermetic poetry and he found it in the dialect. Fortini noted his peculiar use of dialect: "Per Noventa il dialetto è [...] un modo di tenere a distanza l'impossibile lingua della tradizione nazionale" (74). Ca Zorzi's dialect however, was neither the vernacular of his native village Noventa di Piave, nor the dialect spoken in the Venice region; it was the result of a personal manipulation of the existing dialect. As Brevini puts it:

Il dialetto che egli [Noventa] usa è una parlata diversa dalla *koine* veneziana di ascendenza goldoniana, sia dal *patois* veneto di terraferma. È invece il veneziano fortemente italianizzato parlato dalla alta borghesia dell'entroterra veneto con casa a Venezia, 'in canale' come si dice: un linguaggio di nobilissima tradizione, che Noventa contrappone ad un italiano, che gli appare insieme lingua del fascismo e dell'ermetismo. (159)

In his collection *Versi e poesie* Noventa devotes some poems to the issue of his poetic language:

Mi me son fato 'na lengua mia  
Del venezian, de l'italian:  
Gà sti diritti la poesia,  
Che vien da lioghi che regna Pan. (65)

Noventa's language is a modification of both the Venetian and the Italian language, it is a poetic necessity whose right is guaranteed by the tradition of the mythical places where poetry was first practised. According to Manfriani, Noventa's decision to create his own language, different from the existing dialects of Veneto, serves two purposes: "maggiore libertà linguistica e sintattica rispetto alle regole di un linguaggio corrente; sfuggire alla aborrita e contestata classificazione di 'poeta dialettale'" (xxi). To justify his poetic choice Noventa composed one poem:



Parché scrivo in dialeto. . . ?  
 Dante, Petrarca e quel dai Diese Giorni  
 Gà pur scritto in toscan.  
 Seguo l'esempio. (84)

Noventa accepted to call his expressive medium dialect only in so far as it retained the dignity of the official language. His poetry should not be confused with the *poesia dialettale* which critics, at that time, confined to the limited perspective of regionalism, and simplistically dismissed as expression of minor, burlesque themes. This poem is a vindication of the creative rights of poets. Following the example of Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio does not mean using the dialect, but creating one's own language as those great poets did; the emphasis is all on the creative privilege granted to the poets.<sup>15</sup>

Noventa's opposition to the culture of his time entailed both linguistic-stylistic and thematic difference. The dialect, a personal and new language, was suitable to talk about those values which contemporary poetry had either distorted in political propaganda or repudiated. Universal ideals, if proposed by *poeti in lingua* sounded more and more like empty rhetoric or "splendide pompe;" it was necessary to use the "Venessian," a language which still preserved innocence and authenticity, and still enabled the poet to express real sentiments.

Nei momenti che 'l cuor me se rompe  
 Mi no' canto che in Venessian  
 De una lengua le "splendide pompe"  
 Lasso a chi fa mestier d'italian  
 No' gh'è lengua che valga el dialeto  
 Che una mare nascendo ne insegna  
 Ah! l'artista xé ben povareto  
 Che a le prime parole no' impegna  
 Le so più vere canzon.<sup>16</sup> (*Poesie inedite. Opere* 1.139.)

For Noventa the dialect preserved the simplicity and purity of the maternal *Ursprache*, where the emphatic tones of the aulic language of Fascism were replaced by the confidentiality of oral tradition and proverbial wisdom.

Noventa's dispute with the intellectuals of his time is well illustrated in his poem "Fusse un poeta," where he takes a controversial position towards the Ermetici.

Fusse un poeta . . .  
 Ermetico,  
 Parlarà de l'Eterno:  
 De la coscienza in mi,  
 De le stele su mi,

E del mar che voleva e no' voleva  
 (Ah, canagia d'un mar!)  
 Darne le so parole.  
 Ma son . . .  
 (Parché no' dirlo?)  
 Son un poeta.<sup>17</sup> (*Opere* 1.48)

For Debenedetti this poem satirizes the all-encompassing function that the Ermetici assign to poetry, their idea of poetry as a supreme and absolute value, bearer of metaphysical truth. Noventa objects to modern poets who entrust poetry with philosophical tasks, such as the explanation of "Eterno" or philosophy.<sup>18</sup> If poetry were limited to simple human sentiments such as love and friendship, it would still be able to offer some alternatives, albeit less ambitious. Debenedetti recognizes in "Fusse un poeta" precise references to Montale's *Ossi di seppia*. Manfriani, too, thinks that Montale was the primary target of Noventa's attacks against contemporary culture. Manfriani recognizes Montale's strong influence on the Venetian poet and defines his ambivalent relationship towards Montale as:

Una sorta di sofferta, contrastata, forse inconscia, eppur presente "predilezione" per Montale, [...] una "delusione d'amore", [...] irritazione quasi per quello che Montale, solo fra i poeti della sua età, potrebbe essere e non vuol essere. (xxxvii)

Noventa appreciated Montale's effort to acknowledge the limits of modern poetry, and in his theoretical works he praised *Ossi di seppia*, where Montale revealed his poetic impotence.<sup>19</sup> Noventa could not conceal his disappointment at seeing Montale's good energies diverted to the wrong purposes: the poet of *Ossi* was incapable of distancing himself from a cultural thought (Croce's idealism) that led him to affirm poetic aphasia, the inability to speak and express himself.<sup>20</sup> Noventa considered Montale his most direct opponent because he came closer to the truth and was the most dispassionate observer of the truth.

The dialect for Noventa served two purposes: stylistically, it was a medium of protest against the official culture that used Italian; thematically, it allowed for a commitment to universal values that a poet like Montale was forced to reject. Noventa's alternative was not, like Montale's, one of silence and denial, but rather an affirmative statement of classical ideals such as love, friendship, honour, which in the Italian language had lost their authenticity and real meaning after being appropriated by fascist rhetoric. Noventa, who still believed in the importance of traditional values, created a new linguistic medium to be able to express them. To avoid the easy label of "poeta dialettale" Noventa needed to distinguish his dialect from the existing *patois* of the Venice area; this is why he reinvented the vernacular, refining and enriching it with high literary echoes.<sup>21</sup>

Noventa's conversion to dialect was determined by the desire to use a simple, non-contaminated language still capable of proposing a message that could appeal to a new society of simple people.

Uno qualunque me pare de esser,  
 Parlo co' tuti.  
 Fùsselo questo un indizio vero?  
 Fùssela questa la me ambizion?  
 Picolo farne co' tuti i picoli,  
 E morir de passion . . . (*Opere* 1.66)<sup>22</sup>

The *Venessian* is for Noventa the result of unitarian knowledge, it presupposes the choral participation of every person in the cultural practice. In Noventa's vernacular society, the recipients of his poetic message, both higher and lower social classes, should ideally come together and find unity in the use of the same dialect. Gioanola, referring to Noventa's intellectualistic use of the dialect, talks about "progetto romantico di poesia alta e popolare al tempo stesso, contro la cultura borghese" (571). In his poetry Noventa identifies the role of the poet as someone who can indicate the path to a new form of commitment. Noventa has faith in a future for poetry and, despite his awareness of the critical time that modern poets are experiencing, he is confident of the possibility to restore poetry to its original role.

El poeta prepara una fiamma,  
 Pian pianin . . . e el va via pian pianin,  
 Sue no' xé che le prime falive,  
 E la fiamma lo spaventarà. (*Opere* 1.39)

This epigram appears in four different formats, and the revision of the final line indicates the progressive movement towards the poet's new confidence. The first two versions describe the poet as uncertain, scared away by the flame and forced to keep his message concealed (in the second version the final line is "El [il poeta] va via . . . e nissun savarà"). In the third version the poet suggests the possibility of returning to the themes of the great poetry of all time ("E po' forse l'amor vignarà"). The fourth and definitive ending distinctively abandons the realm of suspension and uncertainty produced by "forse" and by the ellipsis, and defines the poet's hierarchy of values: religion and heroism respectively are at the summit ("E po' i santi e l'eroe vignarà"). Noventa did not expect his verses to serve as supreme value, like contemporary modern poets:

Dove i me versi me portaria,  
 Acarezandoli come voialtri,  
 No' so fradeli.

Tocadi i limiti del me valor,  
 Forse mi stesso me inganaria,  
 Crederia sacra l'arte, e la gloria,  
 Più che l'onor. (*Opere* 1.37)

The word "voialtri" refers to those modern poets who consider poetic achievement more important than honour, but to Noventa this is deception. Poetry should limit its scope to more modest objectives and leave space for a higher quest:

No' tuto quello che penso e vedo  
 Vol i me versi spiegar e dir. . .  
 Ma la parola che pur me resta  
 Xé sugerirve: çerché più in là:  
 El Pié-de càvara, in vogia o in festa,  
 Oltre i so limiti no' 'l xé rivà. (*Opere* 1.65)

Poetry and philosophy should not be confused with one another, they should retain their specific tasks. Significantly the choice of dialect was limited to his poetry, to the realm of feelings and traditional values of his cultural roots; for his theoretical essays Noventa used the Italian language.

Singing love and honour as poetic values, when others were hardly uttering "qualche storta sillaba," highlights the "inattualità" of Noventa's poetry. Debenedetti and Manfriani, however, have underscored the role of Ca' Zorzi as an intellectual who was fully active in the culture of his time. His critique of modern poetry reveals a desire to engage in a dialogue with contemporary culture and yet his dispute with the Ermetici and Montale fell on deaf ears. Noventa's primary target, Montale, who was receptive to other dialect poets of the twentieth century, never entered in a debate with Noventa.<sup>23</sup> Noventa's failure to establish a contact with the intellectuals of his time may well be attributable to the "inattualità" of his message, or in Manfriani's terms, to the fact that he was ahead of his time. In fact, Noventa was advocating the rejection of idealistic subjectivism at a time when such a move was still inconceivable. However, we should also consider the impact which the choice of dialect must have had on his chances to appeal to a vast audience. Noventa's linguistic conversion to the *Venessian* made his poetry as exclusive as that of the Ermetici, who were among his main polemical targets. Chiesa and Tesio state:

Nonostante la sua polemica con gli altri ermetici, [Noventa] moveva dalle loro stesse esigenze: la ricerca di un linguaggio lontano da quello retorico e banale [...] della cultura ufficiale; con un di più in lui di aperta polemica politica. (12)

In his essay on dialect poetry Montale made a significant remark regarding the *poesia ermetica*: "Che hanno fatto i poeti italiani impropriamente detti



ermetici – da Ungaretti in poi – se non ricavare una loro lingua, e quasi un loro dialetto, dal linguaggio aulico della poesia corrente?” (“La musa dialettale” 175). Here Montale states that the creation of a personal, exclusive linguistic medium is tantamount to the use of dialect. This formula (hermetic, exclusive language=dialect), if applied to Noventa’s language, leads to the conclusion that his dialect acts as a form of *Ermetismo*, as a private and exclusive code, which was not the one accepted by his contemporaries. Noventa intended his *Venessian* as a *lingua franca*, free from rhetorical tones and hermetic obscurity, suitable to express ideals abandoned by modern poetry. Instead, his verses were destined to marginality and oblivion. There is almost a paradox in Noventa’s poetry: the dialect, a kind of language by definition peripheral for a minority, was entrusted with a message intended to revive universal values that other poets were forced to reject. Noventa’s attempt to stir the contemporary cultural scene and to engage in a dialogue with the intellectuals of his time was impeded, not only by his traditional ideas, but also by the linguistic choice of the dialect, which limited the scope and the operational impact of his message.

In time of ideological revision, now that we can take an objective and more critical look at the heritage of idealistic philosophy, it is possible to better recognize the role of Noventa as poet and intellectual. It is time to free his ideas from the accusation of reactionism, and to give recognition to his verses, as an important contribution to twentieth-century poetry.

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## NOTES

- \* My thanks to Professor Pier Massimo Forni for introducing me to the poetry of Giacomo Noventa. A modified version of this paper was presented at the AAIS convention in 1995.
- 1 The first contribution to dialect poetry in the twentieth century is the anthology edited by Pasolini in 1952. In more recent years some dialect poets appear in collections of modern Italian literature, such as Ravegnani and Rosa; Fortini; and Mengaldo. These anthologies include poetry by Virgilio Giotti, Biagio Marin, Giacomo Noventa, Delio Tessa. Also Gioanola includes some dialect poets in his anthology of Italian poetry of the twentieth century. Exclusively devoted to dialect poetry are the collections of Chiesa and Tesio; and Brevini. These last two anthologies include a bibliography on dialect literature and bibliographical notes on each poet. In North America Haller introduces for the first time to the English-speaking public Italian dialect poetry organized by geographical region and with an English translation.
- 2 To my knowledge only one article by Fido in the English journal *The Italianist* has devoted some space to Giacomo Noventa. Fido identifies a *linea veneta* of twentieth century *poeti in dialetto*, which includes two other fine poets: Biagio Marin and Virgilio Giotti. Pier Massimo Forni kindly made available to me the manuscript of his article “El saòr del pan . . .” of imminent publication in a volume of studies in honour of Dante Della Terza.
- 3 Noventa also composed a remarkable amount of critical work that Manfrianì has collected in the five volumes of *Opere complete*. Volume 1 contains *Versi e poesie*, Volume 2 “*Nulla di nuovo*” e *altri scritti*. 1934-1939, Volume 3 “*Il grande amore*” e *altri scritti*. 1939-1948, Volume 4 “*Dio è con noi*” e *altri scritti*. 1947-1960, Volume 5 “*Il Castogallo*” e *altri scritti*. 1922-1959. All quotations of Noventa’s texts are from this edition of *Opere complete*.

- 4 The issue was first raised by Pancrazi in an article about Virgilio Giotti, whose dialect poetry is considered an *écriture artiste* rather than a popular language; it therefore deserves to be distinguished from *poesia dialettale*. On this topic and on the debate about dialect literature see Bonora.
- 5 Noventa admired European literature, among his favourites were Goethe, Hölderlin, Heine, Ronsard, Lope de Vega, Machado. His predilection for the German language culminates in the composition of verses in German ("Es war einmal . . ." *Opere* 1.133).
- 6 Noventa's dissertation *Ricerche sulla forma migliore di governo* was a critique of the fascist government in law and philosophy. The thesis appears for the first time in vol. 5 of *Opere* (5-27).
- 7 Pampaloni was the first to call Noventa's thought on poetry "inattuale" (3770). Pozzi considers Noventa's choice of the Venetian dialect a return to a nostalgic and regressive past, and his poetic message of moral and universal values anachronistic (350; 352).
- 8 In the biographical note to Noventa's verses, Mengaldo states: "Per la posizione letteraria e ideologica non solo isolata ma controcorrente del suo autore, la poesia di Noventa non ha trovato grazia presso la critica ufficiale più legata alla 'lirica nuova' [...] scarsa anche l'udienza presso la migliore lirica successiva" (632).
- 9 "Poesia" or "lirica nuova" is intended in the terms posed by Luciano Anceschi in his anthology *Lirici Nuovi*, which includes the lyric production (from 1925 to 1942) of those authors which reflected a new tendency in contemporary poetry, such as Ungaretti, Saba, Montale, Quasimodo, Bertolucci, Gatto, Luzi, Penna, Sereni.
- 10 "Principio di una scienza nuova," "Manifesti del classicismo" and "I calzoni di Beethoven" are the three theoretical works that mark the essential development of Noventa's thought. *La riforma letteraria* was published until 1939 and was the centre of circulation of new ideas in strong opposition with the other Florentine periodicals of the time. Among its collaborators were Franco Fortini, Geno Pampaloni, Giorgio Spini, Valentino Bucchi.
- 11 *Nulla di nuovo* includes "Principio di una scienza nuova" and "Manifesti del classicismo;" it was first published by *Il Saggiatore* in Milan in 1960.
- 12 Manfriani illustrates Noventa's philosophical ideas of reform in the lengthy "Prefazione" to the second volume of *Opere* (ix-cxxi). This volume is devoted primarily to *Nulla di nuovo*. The reform of contemporary Italian culture entails a rejection of Protestantism and idealism, and a return to Catholicism. Noventa's Catholicism does not include any form of relation with the Church.
- 13 Noventa himself prepared his biographical profile for Pasolini's anthology of *Poesia dialettale del Novecento* and defined himself "rivoluzionario liberale, cattolico, socialista mili-tante" (384).
- 14 Noventa was also founder of *Il Socialismo moderno* and *Il Giornale dei Socialisti*, periodicals of cultural and political thought which did not belong to any official party and had a very limited and exclusive circulation.
- 15 Mentioning the three most important representatives of the Italian literary tradition Noventa indicates the stature he attributes to his poetry. He preferred Dante for his political commitment and for his strong Catholic faith.
- 16 The original text of these verses exhibits this omission of punctuation.
- 17 Debenedetti (204-5) finds in "Fusse un poeta" precise references to Montale's poems "Mediterraneo" and "Esterina" of *Ossi di seppia*.
- 18 In lines 4-5 Debenedetti identifies references to Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, and precisely to the most famous sentences of the final chapter. Hermetic poets were not interested in Kant's philosophy, so in this context Kant is a metaphor for the complexity of philosophy; of Kant Noventa quotes the most famous sentences, the ones everybody knows, thereby mocking the Ermetici's philosophical pretences and pointing at the weakness of their theoretical ideas *vis à vis* the thought of the greatest modern philosopher.
- 19 In his essay *Principio di una scienza nuova* (*Opere* 2.63-278) Noventa states that Montale's best verses are "quelli in cui egli parla della poesia che muore e che è morta per lui" (91).

- 20 In Manfriani's terms, in its attempt to reject the rhetorical tones of Carducci and D'Annunzio, contemporary poetry was forced to celebrate the death of poetry, to plunge into the aphasic impossibility to speak (xxv).
- 21 In the biographical profile included in Pasolini's anthology, Noventa defined his own poetic language as something different from the *poesia dialettale* of his time: "Quanto alla sua poesia, se Noventa ritiene che essa non possa essere detta dialettale nel senso corrente del termine, ritiene ancora meno che possa essere inclusa nella cosiddetta poesia o letteratura italiana" (384).
- 22 This poem mingles simplicity with learned allusions, which the poet himself discloses in the parenthetical addendum to the title: the poem echoes *motifs* by Goethe.
- 23 In several essays, now collected in *Sulla poesia*, Montale shows his interest for dialect poets (Eduardo Firpo [37-40], Virgilio Giotto [222-24; 231-33], Salvatore Di Giacomo [310-15], Albino Pierro [341-42]); but Noventa is only briefly mentioned in the article "La musa dialettale" (175-80).

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# Looking Fat: Ironizing Fetishism in Marchesa Colombi's *Un matrimonio in provincia*

Cristina Mazzoni

In spite of an apparent complementarity, the term "matrimonio" is not analogous to "patrimonio." While the latter indicates what is inherited from one's father ("pater"), the former refers to marriage as the state in which a woman may become a mother, "mater" (Cardona 303). Here definitions suggest the false symmetries, the fictionally complementary roles with which men and women are vested in the traditional, patriarchal family. Men's and women's roles are asymmetrical, being unequal and lacking reciprocity, men are identified with the public realm of patrimonial economics and women confined to the private space of mothering. Asymmetry, thematic as well as stylistic, matrimonial as well as rhetorical, is a recurring modality in Marchesa Colombi's (1840-1920) short novel *Un matrimonio in provincia* (1885) – "un'opera apparentemente asettica e inoffensiva," yet "carica di valenze insospettate" (Nozzoli 20). *Un matrimonio* is generally considered Colombi's best work as well as one of the most original literary products of turn-of-the-century Italian women's writing.<sup>1</sup>

Asymmetry is also intrinsic to irony (Mizzau 51), the principal rhetorical choice of Marchesa Colombi's novel which, with one of its voices, denounces the institution of marriage even as its principal characters are vociferously devoted to it. And asymmetry also characterizes what psychoanalysis describes as the perversions, especially fetishism: the "model perversion," in Foucault's often quoted definition (154). Its origin as recounted by Sigmund Freud in "Fetishism" is well known (fetishism having been a popular concept in literary and cultural criticism since the 1980s) and can be quickly summarized: the little boy who sees that his mother does not have a penis (contrary to the fact that he had always imagined her to be endowed with one), disavows such perception, refuses to recognize his mother's lack (what seems to him to be her apparent castration) and avows the presence of the missing penis, instead, elsewhere – on another body part, perhaps, or a piece of clothing. This latter object (often the last one seen before the frightful vision, or non-vision, of the gap) is a compensation which constitutes the fetish: a foot, underwear, a hand, a glove, boots... fur, perhaps, metonymically reminiscent of maternal pubic hair.

Fetishism, a visual defense mechanism against the fear of castration, is a refusal to recognize the mother's body as lacking, implying a rejection (or an occultation) of sexual difference. And fetishism is above all the mark of perversion. What I propose to do in the following pages is to initially occupy the site of the fetishist, to perversely camouflage as one (transsexually, in a sense, for Freud's traumatized fetishist is male),<sup>2</sup> in order to begin reading Marchesa Colombi's *Un matrimonio in provincia* differently – without, I hope, the apologetic (antifetishistic) avowal of lack that tends to preface critical readings of women writers of her time. In doing so, I will temporarily occupy, however perversely, a space already inhabited by this very text. Because by refusing to recognize a lack in the female body, in the woman's text, by disavowing the absence of what was never supposed to be there in the first place (a penis, a male thematics and stylistics), I can read a woman's text as whole (with respect to the phallic canon/cannon of visibility), as a pleasure-giving fetish rather than as an anxiety-producing gap – in spite of what others might recognize as its physical, textual lack (reflected in the conspicuous exclusion of writers such as Marchesa Colombi from literary anthologies and the literary canon).<sup>3</sup>

*Un matrimonio in provincia* displays a textual economy which might be (again, perhaps, perversely) likened to the workings of fetishism, primarily because of its use of literary devices reminiscent of the psychological mechanisms of disavowal and recognition. At a most basic, thematic level, the young protagonist, Denza, manifests a willing suspension of knowledge (of the destructiveness of marriage as an institution) in favor of belief (in its illusory promises) – the fetishist's own defense mechanism. More generally, in this novel as in many other women's texts from that period (for example, Marchesa Colombi's own short story "Una vocazione" and Neera's novels *Duello d'anime* and *Crevalcore*), the very possibility of maternal lack is excluded through an elision of the mother's body – the unrepresentable, the primary object of repression. If the mother is dead or otherwise absent (an often conspicuous absence which itself constitutes a covert criticism of the social and biological condition of women in turn-of-the-century familial structures), she has no body and hence no visible lack. A position of powerlessness – death, certainly, but also illness, internment – can thus be perversely figured, from one of the text's multiple yet self-consciously partial perspectives, as a site of untouchable impassability. By withdrawing herself from observation, the mother prevents the recognition of her alleged castration, even as she impels its disavowal by the text. As a consequence, the daughter (Denza, for example) has no (necessarily lacking) model to imitate in her sexual development: the frightful, incisible gap will not be passed on from one generation to the next.

But a more important technique of disavowal, one founded on presence rather than absence, is based on the textual insistence on the embodied nature of vision.<sup>4</sup> In *Un matrimonio in provincia* perspective is necessarily partial, knowledge situated, and thus no imaginary pretense at a visual totality is ever

made – as the logic of fetishism, devoted to a totalizing real, would instead imply. There is no transcendent, symbolic split between visual subject and object, no self-distancing which makes absence, lack, castration a thing of the other, the other's problem.<sup>5</sup> Thus for example the irony characteristic of late-nineteenth-century women writers (see for example Santoro 17), that very irony which is the guiding trope of this novel, joins rather than divides two equally important partial perspectives – one serious, one comic – neither one of which could be elided without resulting in the novel's disappearance. For Marchesa Colombi's novel consists precisely of the contrast between these two divergent "looks" at marriage.<sup>6</sup>

Like irony, fetishism combines two different perspectives: just as the fetish enables the fetishist to simultaneously recognize and deny the woman's castration, irony allows the ironist both to reject and to reappropriate the discourse of reference (Schor, "Fetishism and Its Ironies" 98). And in this move it fundamentally relies on the gaze: at the mother's body, at the bodily gap, at the substitute that fills such a gap for the anxious vision of the onlooker. The fetish, in Laura Mulvey's words, must hold "the fetishist's eyes fixed on the seduction of belief to guard against the encroachment of knowledge" (12). Gazing is the central, self-deluding activity of the love protagonists of *Un matrimonio in provincia*, Denza Dellara and Onorato Mazzucchetti, as well as of several other characters. And gazing is unambiguously identified, through the dialect of Novara (the town where the novel is set), as the vehicle of sexual attraction and/as romantic love. Denza's and Onorato's courtship, made up almost entirely of an exchange of looks, falls squarely within the social customs of the Novarese bourgeoisie – though, unchanging like Onorato's fat body, this frozen visual courtship never develops for the protagonists into anything else: "Quegli amori d'occhiate sono talmente centrati in uso a Novara, che parlando di due innamorati nel ceto civile, si dice: 'Il Tale *guarda* la Tale.' Soltanto parlando di operai e bottegai si dice: 'Il Tale *parla* alla Tale'" (71). In both cases, the male is the subject that performs the action – "Il Tale" – is idiomatically constituted as an object. As Donna Haraway rightly notes, "Vision is *always* a question of the power to see – and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices" (287-8).

But in the novel this subject/object distinction is not nearly so polarized. While it is clear that, in terms of visualizing practices, Onorato occupies a position of power with respect to Denza (for his gender and economic status make him free to subtract his body from her gaze – by traveling abroad, for example), on a more subtle level Denza's gaze is transgressive because of its excess, its indecorousness, its insistence upon looking in spite of its inappropriateness: she stares at Onorato, for example, during the consecration at Mass, its most solemn, sacred moment. Denza appropriates the fetishist's gaze, though her fetish becomes romantic love itself (and its bourgeois corollary, marriage) – that with which she disavows and covers over Onorato's lack of

sexual attractiveness, his grotesquely fat body (a fetishizing move made necessary by what we might call Denza's "inability to tolerate the necessary incompleteness of experience," Ian 88). Denza nonetheless continues to regard as real that which the text posits as a simulation (marriage in a patriarchal society) – a simulation of which the text makes its readers acutely aware. Emotional absence (he will never propose to Denza, marrying instead someone of his own economic rank) is paradoxically figured in Onorato's constitution as fleshy overabundance, his aesthetic gap as bodily excess (a paradox that also recurs in theoretical writings about fetishism: what signifies deficiency for Freud constitutes instead excess for Marx and Bataille). Although Onorato is at first euphemistically described by Denza's cousin Maria as being only "un po' grasso" (35), still, judging from the description of his lengthy and frequent weight loss programs (steambaths in Tuscany, cold exposure and hydropathic therapy in Oropa...), Denza rightly begins to be "impressione da quella grassezza," and imagines him to be "una balena" (36). So, when she first sees him, her "Fausto grasso" (41), pachidermic in his long, gray overcoat, gives her indeed the (animalistic) impression of being "un elefante" and "un coso tutto d'un pezzo" (47) – a description which underscores, with an ironically humorous tone, the wholeness ("tutto d'un pezzo") of his unmutated male body.

The representation of fat is central to the construction of gender in *Un matrimonio in provincia*. For although Onorato is without doubt the fat character in the novel – its whale, its elephant – the function and meaning of his fat (whose unattractive connotations are always subordinated, in the talk of the townsfolk, to the desirability of his economic status) are radically different from the fat ascribed, in two different contexts, to Denza herself. Let me state first of all that in Marchesa Colombi's novel fat is never related to food and eating, a severance that underlines the peculiar status of fat as both literary metaphor and cultural symbol by disengaging it from its most obvious material cause. Female fat is portrayed as both positive – when Denza is a marriageable young woman – and negative, in the curious proleptic epilogue to the novel. After stating that she is now married to Scalchi, a notary and rice-grower endowed with a large wart on his forehead (to which of course I return below), and that she has three children, Denza notes, in the very last sentence of the book (also a paragraph in itself): "Il fatto è che ingrasso" (100). Given the humorously ironic tone of the entire novel, this statement contradicts the superficial contentedness of the two preceding short paragraphs, in which Denza's father proclaimed her marital happiness and her stepmother extolled her youthful, carefree appearance. Clearly Denza's weight gain – her bodily opinion concerning her situation, her own fleshy excess nostalgically mirroring, though with an opposite meaning, that of the man she has lost – indicates a degree of unease, perhaps even a sense of entrapment within her reproductive body in turn indicative of the toll that marriage and childbearing take on woman's con-



stitution. Ermenegilda Pierobon writes about this very passage: "L'ingrassare del corpo in seguito alla nascita di tre figli diventa metafora di una carenza di nutrimento interiore che la rende incapace di sostenere a sua volta altri esseri" ("Maternità e conflittualità" 204).<sup>7</sup> But "Il fatto è che ingrasso" is also a surprising statement which recapitulates the irony permeating *Un matrimonio in provincia* and which justifies critic Anna Santoro's judgment that Marchesa Colombi's "scrittura asciutta," her "ironia e la grazia" are "una novità nella letteratura di questi anni" (20).<sup>8</sup> Many critics have noted the absence of openly feminist positions in turn-of-the-century Italian women writers (Sibilla Aleramo's autobiographical novel *Una donna*, 1906, being the most notable exception), so that a critical reflection on the condition of women must be sought for in these symptomatic details. Anna Nozzoli, for instance, describes Marchesa Colombi's heroines as "portatrici di una inconfessata, rancorosa, repressa coscienza del proprio asservimento" (5) – a repression that returns in Denza's symptomatic body fat: Nozzoli significantly interprets the very last words of the novel as "I segni di una consapevolezza conquistata" (22).

The growing Denza is at the end of the book a matronly figure who, not without humor, embodies the bourgeois values of domesticity, even as she ironically condemns them. Her increasing size, for example, indicates she no longer takes long hikes as she used to do as a girl, in the company of her father and sister. But as a young woman, Denza's fleshiness marked instead her desirability: "grassezza fa bellezza" was a popular turn-of-the-century opinion confirmed by beauty manuals (de Giorgio 225), and Denza is described by men as "una bella ragazzona," that is, with an accrescitive. Although she risks losing weight out of angered frustration ("divoravo una stizza, che non so come facessi a non dimagrarne," 29), thus using an expression which posits weight-loss as unwanted, desirably and most miraculously gains weight in her sleep ("ingrassando nel sonno," 30). Several competing paradigms (of body, class and gender) seem to converge onto Denza's changing, growing body, and the multi-layered nature of this representation underlines its inability to fit within the neat parameters of a (masculinist) canon of literary realism. From a linguistic viewpoint, we could say that Denza's final self-description is a peculiarly female way of appropriating, through citational irony, male literary discourse: the text, its female narrator is in the process of "giocare a usare il linguaggio dell'avversario, fare finta di adattarvisi, in realtà sentirne e fare sentire il vuoto, l'assenza" (Mizzau 51). If fat is desirable in a young woman because it is an index of fertility and the ability to breastfeed (see for example Anna Scott Beller's chapter "Women: Venus as Endomorph," in *Fat and Thin*), once that potential has been fulfilled, as is has been for Denza at the end of the novel, the now socially useless fat is emptied and able to signify something other than a reflection of man's desire (desire for the woman, desire for his own reproduction).

Denza's fat, however, unlike Onorato's, is not an absence in search of a cover-up fetish. It is in itself an object of desire (or, alternately, a subject of critique), and not only with respect to men – since Denza openly, even indecorously enjoys looking at herself in a mirror, both at home and at the theater (31-35), attracting the mockery of her sister and cousins. Furthermore, at the linguistic level, the two types of fat are repeatedly marked, through the category of gender, as either passive or active. But, surprisingly, it is the static, unchanging fat that is gendered as male. Thus, while Denza's growth is a mobile and changing shape figured with verbs – “ingrassando nel sonno” (30) she acquires beauty, and by stating “il fatto è che ingrasso” (100) she corporeally criticizes her own condition – Onorato's size is described on the other hand through adjectives or appositions alone: he is “grasso” (35, 36, 38, 41, 47, 68, 76), “una balena” (36), “una specie di elefante” (47), “colossale” (53), “quel grassone” (86). As Lauren Berlant says, “fat is so powerful and so social that it overwhelms the proper name of the person, whose fat takes over the space where personality usually resides” (159). Weight-loss programs prove useless in fighting the all-engulfing presence of Onorato's fat (and the absence toward which it gestures), his primary attribute if not his very essence.

Even just on the basis of this discussion of fat, it should be clear to anyone familiar with turn-of-the-century literature and cultural paradigms of female pathology that *Un matrimonio in provincia* is strikingly innovative in terms of the representation of the body. The novel openly disavows, like a fetishist, the canonically pathological lack inherent to the female body, replacing it instead with Denza's healthy, full beauty. This is a thematic and structural innovation with respect to that literary tradition, exemplified in many texts of *scapigliatura*, *verismo*, and *decadentismo* (not to mention anthropological treatises such as Cesare Lombroso's *La donna delinquente, la prostituta e la donna normale*, 1893), which identified womanhood with pathology, and the female body as governed by an always-already sick uterus (that very castration that made of fetishism the “model perversion”).<sup>9</sup> The changing, open female body, the body of becoming and process, is followed by Marchesa Colombi's novel in a growth that is both desirable and desiring: not only does Denza gain weight in her sleep, but she needs new clothes for her increasing size (82), and literally bursts out of her old ones (27). Her body is neither sick nor, although “in-process,” grotesque (in Bakhtin's terminology). What does indeed appear grotesque, animalesque (a whale, an elephant), as well as pathological (given the continuous though ineffectual therapies Onorato must undergo) is what Bakhtin calls the classical, monumental body which, although fat, is closed, impenetrable, static, embodying the ideals of bourgeois individualism. (Berlant more generally notes that, “as a thing denotes an unquantified substance, its [fat's] very fixity accrues to itself more stability of identity than one might have imagined,” 159.)

This male-gendered unchanging corporeality is embodied not only in Onorato but also, at the end of the novel, in Scalchi, the rice-growing notary and, in the end, Denza's husband. She imagines him to be "un mostro," and, as was the case with Onorato's fatness, she is "impressioneata," even before meeting him, at the sheer thought of the walnut-sized wart on his forehead (93-94) – irremovable, uncoverable, unchanging. His body, like Onorato's, is excessive (though in a more localized manner) and therefore aberrant, deviant, monstrous, visible only if disavowed. The female narrating voice of *Un matrimonio in provincia* interrogates literary and cultural models of bodily normality, undoing the fixedly gendered stereotype while reshaping corporeality from another perspective, one that positions itself as disturbing, transforming alterity.<sup>10</sup> Even as it calls into question literary paradigms of bodily misogyny, with all their ideological appendages, this novel carves out an other corporeality, one that is not exclusively dictated by the reproductive function – except perhaps to operate, at the very end, as a social critique.

"Can we learn to think differently about difference?" asks feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti (62), echoing a question that pervades much feminist theory. In the essay where this question appears, Braidotti discusses "the *topos* of women as the sign of abnormality, and therefore of difference as a mark of inferiority," which "remained a constant in Western scientific discourse" (63) – and, I would add, in veristic and decadent literature as well. Though the binary logic which implies an opposition between beauty and ugliness, normality and deviance, health and pathology is not dislodged in *Un matrimonio in provincia*, still in this female universe the otherness of difference is indeed thought of differently: for difference in its pejorative sense is paradoxically identified with the unchanging nature of sameness, identified in this text with the male body. It is the self-identical body that is perceived as monstrous, frightful, needing to be covered up with a desirable fetish – be it romantic love or its corollary, a good marriage (Denza's own normal perversion). What Braidotti sees as the "morphological dubiousness of the female body," whose ability to "change shape so drastically is troublesome in the eyes of the logocentric economy within which to see is the primary act of knowledge and *the gaze* the basis of all epistemic awareness" (64) is a criticism that is totally turned upside down, inside out in *Un matrimonio in provincia*. For the gaze in this novel is self-consciously embodied, partial – and I refer not only to the characters' gaze, but also, at a structural level, to the "gaze" of the novel itself, characterized by a dual, ironic perspective. What is unchangeable is not necessarily knowable, describable – on the contrary, its staticity is ungraspable by a body (Denza's, the text's, the reader's) that is necessarily growing, changing, moving its perspective.

The irony permeating, informing, even constituting this novel is thus indissolubly linked, in their common self-laceration, to its fetishistic mode: the



splitting of perspectives of the ironic text corresponds to the fracture of the ego, the *Ichspaltung* crucial to fetishism (the presence of nothingness and the sign of its absence). In both irony and fetishism something is affirmed to the same extent it is denied.<sup>11</sup> In both, the question of reference, of the shifting relationship between signifier and signified, is acutely raised. Disavowal and recognition characterize Freud's little fetishist-to-be (who disavows his mother's lack yet also, paradoxically, recognizes it), but they also mark Denza's vision (Onorato is fat and unromantic yet he is seen as handsome and desirable), the narrator's (Denza's change is not pathological, yet she does self-consciously end up deformed), and the text's own dual perspective. "Fetishism," as Laura Mulvey rightly notes, "acknowledges the question of reference within its own symptomatic structure" (5). It highlights the difficulty of signifying reality, it articulates "the relation between representations and their skewed referentiality (Mulvey 5). In the blurb he wrote for the cover of the edition that brought *Un matrimonio in provincia* back for contemporary readers, Italo Calvino has noted that Marchesa Colombi's descriptions give "l'effetto del massimo di tristezza col massimo d'allegria poetica." The book disavows the squalor of its women characters' condition through the recognition of a poetic humor which, through its irony, lets the reader into this perverse literary game. Thus Anna Nozzoli attributes to Marchesa Colombi's words "valenze anfibie, una esplicita, manifesta, l'altra sottintesa e antitetica" (22), which result in a bitter criticism of marriage, a recognition of its destructive implications, even as these same amphibian words ironically extol its virtues by disavowing its lack.

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## NOTES

- 1 Kroha calls it "a small literary masterpiece" (153), Pierobon, more reservedly, "forse il testo migliore della sua vasta produzione" ("L'enomità del reale" 29). Interestingly enough, this novel is repeatedly used in the important collection of essays *La famiglia italiana*, eds. Melograni and Scaraffia, as a reliable source of social history (Montroni 110-11, 125-26, 128).
- 2 As Schor notes, "it is an article of faith with Freud and Freudians that *fetishism is the male perversion par excellence*" ("Female Fetishism" 365). On female fetishism, see for example Gamman and Makinen, who argue that "acknowledging female fetishism leads to a need for a new psychoanalytic representation of the female erotic" (7).
- 3 Bernheimer rightly calls "the truth of castration," central to the etiology of fetishism, "a phallogocentric deceit: woman cannot be deprived of an organ that was never hers in the first place" (65).
- 4 In this definition of partial vision I have been influenced by Haraway's essay "The Persistence of Vision," where she proposes a feminist epistemology of scientific knowledge.
- 5 I am here interpreting as positive that aspect of fetishism which Ian, for example, criticizes as "a conflagration of self and other, self and world, into an unrealistically and narcissistically enlarged self, characterized by the refusal to individuate, the lack of ego development, and an inability to use symbols to represent rather than to embody" (177).
- 6 Mizzau sees irony as a trope privileged by women: "La donna, si è detto, è estranea al lin-



- guaggio dominante, al codice imposto dal maschile: quindi, più propensa a trattare il linguaggio dall'esterno, citazionalmente, ironicamente, perché è più facile prendere le distanze da qualcosa che non ci appartiene" (51). Mizzau also interprets the oblique, indirect mode of communication characteristic of irony as typical of those who occupy a subordinate position – "l'ironia quindi consona al linguaggio femminile" (57). The question of irony underlines the marginal status of Italian women writers even within the already marginal history of women's literature. While readers of turn-of-the-century Italian women writers cannot fail to note the crucial presence of irony in these texts, Schor writes that "it is generally acknowledged that with the spectacular exception of Jane Austen, irony does not feature prominently in the history of women's fiction" ("Fetishism and Its Ironies" 98).
- 7 In another article Pierobon claims that in *Un matrimonio in provincia* "l'esperienza di madre è presentata in modo così asciutto ed impersonale, quasi fosse del tutto autonoma e meccanica, da apparire interamente slegata dalla sfera psico-emotiva della protagonista. Il ruolo materno [...] è di nuovo svilito" ("L'enormità del reale" 305).
  - 8 These formal innovations also lead Kroha to state that "this is indeed a novel whose construction foregrounds questions of gender [...] in a complex mediation between established literary conventions and the experience of the writer" (154), while Pierobon remarks that "la lingua asciutta, scarna, concentrata, a cui si aggiunge la stessa scelta di una narrazione a breve respiro, pare riflettere la chiusura e l'angustia asfissiante della realtà della protagonista" ("L'enormità del reale" 293-94).
  - 9 On this subject, see for example Cavalli, "Scienza e romanzo;" Curreri, "Seduzione e malattia;" Babini et al., *La donna nelle scienze dell'uomo*.
  - 10 This transformation of a stereotype is not unlike that "mythic revisionism" that Re reads in texts of contemporary Italian women poets: the process "whereby these poets 'steal' old stories and change them utterly, so that they can no longer stand as foundations of collective male fantasy, and become, rather, part of a feminine symbolic order" (194).
  - 11 Although I find striking analogies in *Un matrimonio in provincia* between the processes of irony and those of fetishism (analogies that Schor has also found, though with quite different effects, in reading Flaubert), the latter is traditionally compared to synecdoche. In the words of Agamben, "the substitution, in synecdoche, of part for whole (or of a contiguous object for another) corresponds, in fetishism, to the substitution of one part of the body (or of an object annexed to it) for the whole sexual partner" (32). But since there is no whole to which the part refers, Spackman rightly claims that catachresis is a more appropriate trope than synecdoche for fetishism (192-93).

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David Wallace. *Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997. Pp. xix, 555.

David Wallace finds Chaucer engaged in surprising ideological areas. Wallace's account of Chaucer's polity challenges conventionally evaluative periodisations as well as offering a radically new configuration of Chaucer's involvement with discourses that are generally associated with the Italian Renaissance. Chaucer's reworking of those discourses suggests the ideal of a generously inclusive associational polity in comparison with which the subsequent Renaissance must appear as a dark age of autocratic absolutism. Wallace approaches Chaucer's poetry through a rich blend of Marxist historiography, cultural materialism, and gender studies.

The Chaucer who emerges from Wallace's study found in the polarity of Milan and Florence (represented largely by Petrarch and Boccaccio) a textual and cultural focus for his own location in English culture and politics. Chaucer had a mercantile background, but was employed in a court whose king had increasingly absolutist yearnings. The guild-structure of Chaucer's mercantile world suggested the possibility of a polity that was associational, voluntarist, and multivocal. Wallace shows that Chaucer was politically sophisticated enough to read and understand the cultural semiotics of the republican Florence that he visited in 1373, and to recognize its antithesis in absolutist Lombardy under the Visconti.

The *compagnie* of pilgrims in *The Canterbury Tales* at once recalls English guild-structure and the voluntary *brigata* of Boccaccio's *Decameron* (which Chaucer had not read). Both texts, Wallace argues, emerge from similar sites of political conflict and aspiration. However, in its striking inclusiveness, Chaucer's associational *compagnie* differs from the Florentine *brigata*; Chaucer's group allows more varied and more distinctive voices to be heard speaking for themselves, and membership is less restricted by class or occupation. Lombardy is always the site of tyranny (or, at least, of absolutism) in Chaucer. Here, Griselda suffers Walter's tyrannical gaze in Boccaccio's vernacular, Petrarch's Latin, and Chaucer's English in *The Clerk's Tale*; here May defeats the male absolutism of January. Albertano of Brescia provides Chaucer with one of his lengthiest arguments against masculine absolutism, the domestic reflex of political tyranny. Chaucer knew Milan, having visited it as a diplomat in 1378, during the reign of Bernabò Visconti.

Wallace argues convincingly that Chaucer's experience of Renaissance Italy and its literature helped shape the discursive tensions and polarities of *The Canterbury Tales*, and that Chaucer is writing out of the same ideological problematics as writers such as Boccaccio and Petrarch. For example, most critics place the first dialogic break in *The Canterbury Tales* at the point when the drunken Miller interrupts Harry Bailey's orderly progression of tale-tellers. Wallace, however, suggests that the first break comes even earlier with *The Knight's Tale*, the *first* of the tales. The loose, as-

sociational structure of the *General Prologue*, Wallace maintains, is contradicted by the Knight's gloomy vision of a dreary absolutism, a drastic reworking of Boccaccio's *Teseida*. Chaucer uses *The Monk's Tale* to align himself with Boccaccio against Petrarch in his treatment of the falls of great men. Like Boccaccio, and unlike Petrarch, Chaucer refuses to locate the problems raised by the fall of princes in a comfortably distant past. Chaucer's tale emphasizes the solitude of tyrants, and their fall as the inevitable consequence of that solitude.

A second thread of Wallace's argument involves Chaucer's persistent gendering of political debate. Theseus' absolutism silences women; Hippolita and Emelye are the pawns of Thesean politics. Apollo's tyranny in *The Manciple's Tale* kills his wife. The silence of the female voice accompanies tyranny in Chaucer and, as Wallace shows, women's rhetoric (usually domestically deployed) is frequently the only corrective to or restraint upon male absolutist aspirations and behaviour. Even Theseus will listen to women if they prostrate themselves before him. Prudence (in *The Tale of Melibee*, based on Albertano of Brescia) persuades her husband to give up thoughts of vengeance on the men who raped her and attacked her daughter. The Wife of Bath rhetorically creates space for herself and her pleasures in the face of male attempts to tyrannize women. In her tale, a woman's discourse outweighs the masculine desire for retributive justice and sovereignty. May uses language to persuade her husband, old January, to interpret what he sees as she wants him to. In a brilliant analysis of the two prologues to *The Legend of Good Women*, Wallace suggests that the later version represents Chaucer's recognition that, with the death of Anne of Bohemia, no female voice remains to intercede with the increasingly tyrannical Richard II, and that the possibility of an associational polity, like that suggested by *The Canterbury Tales*, is no longer available. Interestingly, it is the *poet* who needs feminine intercession in *The Legend*; feminine rhetoric is his only protection against the wrathful God of Love.

Wallace argues convincingly that Chaucer enacts textually the political conflicts that we associate with the Italian Renaissance, and that these conflicts were also firmly rooted in the England of his day. Wallace's tantalizingly brief glances at Lancastrian and sixteenth-century English literature (especially Shakespeare) confirm Chaucer's pessimistic assessment of the possibilities for an associational polity. He suggests that sixteenth-century England had to reject Chaucer in favour of Petrarch (and the aristocratically inclined Boccaccio) because Chaucer's successful union of individual voices within an associational polity was simply too inclusive and voluntarist to suit the aristocratic society of a state with a radically centralizing government. Henry VIII was a more successful tyrant than Richard II. In Wallace's view, a glimpse of the older associational polity appears in the tavern scenes from *Henry IV*, Part 1. But, however much Prince Hal may recognize his need for the associational (if decayed) world of Sir John Falstaff, he will finally reject it. Even at his most involved, Hal looks at Falstaff's world as a rather critical outsider. Peasant entertainment is a source of aristocratic, contemptuous mirth in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Chaucer's countryfolk always get their own back on urban sophisticates. As Wallace shows, this inclusive reciprocity separates him from Shakespeare, and even from Boccaccio whose peasants are regularly fooled and tricked by their more sophisticated superiors, but are never allowed to return the compliment.

A brief review cannot say enough about Wallace's work. Theoretically, he is sophisticated, and deploys theory unobtrusively in a language that is neither obscure nor



rebarbative. The accessibility of Wallace's argument is astonishing. Culturally, the book is extremely rich in its allusiveness. Wallace analyzes material from the arts, law, commerce, and many other areas in support of his thesis. His work draws on the very best of recent scholarship and criticism, and must provide a new direction for how we teach and think about the literature of the *longue durée* from the fourteenth century to the sixteenth. Finally, Wallace is witty... seriously and provocatively entertaining. For example, he argues that Chaucer is the sixth husband in search of whom the Wife of Bath has come on the pilgrimage! Shakespeare, Wallace suggests, casts Chaucer as Bottom the Weaver in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

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Francesco Palmario di Ancona. *Rime*. Edizione critica a cura di Nelia Cacace Saxby. Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1997 (Collezione di opere inedite o rare pubblicate dalla Commissione per i testi di lingua 151). Pp. xcvi, 175.

Viene alla luce con questo volume un poeta del Quattrocento marco-emiliano finora quasi del tutto sconosciuto, Francesco Palmario di Ancona, laureato *in utroque iure* all'Università di Padova (1434) e poi funzionario alla corte riminese di Sigismondo Malatesta. Le *Rime* di Palmario si conservano in un unico codice alla Bodley Library (Oxford), acquistato nel 1817 in seguito alla vendita della biblioteca dell'abate Luigi Canonici. La curatrice le ha accuratamente trascritte seguendo l'ordine originale del manoscritto e vi ha aggiunto un esteso apparato critico composto di introduzione, note, bibliografia, e indici.

Il lungo saggio introduttivo (ix-xcvi) si divide in quattro diverse sezioni. La prima è un attento e minuzioso studio del codice stesso (ix-xiv). La curatrice ne esamina non solo la grafia, le aggiunte, le annotazioni, e le correzioni, ma anche la carta, le misure, e le filigrane. Riesce così a datarlo tra il 1460-1480 e a concludere, tra l'altro, che questo è "una copia intermedia fra gli originali e la bella copia finale" andati ormai perduti. La seconda sezione sull'autore e le sue rime (xv-lv) ne ricostruisce la figura politico-culturale e la aggancia al suo corpus poetico rivelando i contatti e collegamenti di Palmario non solo con diversi intellettuali del tempo, quali Leonardo Bruni e Biagio Guasconi (fiorentino esiliato ad Ancona), ma anche con figure politiche, quali il cardinale Prospero Colonna e Sigismondo Malatesta, signore di Rimini. Rime politiche, epistolari e amorose si alternano finché Palmario non entra nel servizio del Malatesta; a questo punto la sua vena poetica inizia ad esaltare non solo il nuovo signore, ma anche l'amore di questi per la bella Isotta degli Atti (di cui il Malatesta si era impossessato nel 1446 quando la giovane fanciulla era ancora tredicenne). Funzionario-poeta di Sigismondo, Palmario compone queste rime non solo in voce propria, elogiando l'amore di Sigismondo per Isotta, ma anche in voce di Sigismondo, designando l'amata con l'appellativo "Isotta mia." Benché i richiami, calchi, vocaboli, e temi petrarcheschi abbondino, le rime di Palmario ritengono tuttavia qualcosa di originale nell'espressione di contesti personali e regionali in cui egli opera, come

anche certi aspetti formali in cui egli sembra distanziarsi dalla tradizione poetica toscano-settentrionale. Ad esempio, gli schemi delle sue canzoni non coincidono con quelli in uso nel Tre-Quattrocento toscano e si distinguono da quelli delle canzoni coeve sia toscane che settentrionali. Uno studio approfondito di queste strutture indica che "mentre da un lato il Palmario si rifà alla più arcaica tradizione (...) dall'altro condivide con i rimatori a lui vicini la tendenza alla sperimentazione scostandosi perciò dall'archetipo petrarchesco" (xlv). La terza sezione consiste di una bibliografia, presentata sotto la voce di "Tavola delle abbreviazioni" (lvii-lx). La quarta è un lungo spoglio linguistico, molto preciso e dettagliato (lxi-xciv), che esamina la grafia latineggiante, le consuetudini grafiche, la fonologia, la morfologia, e anche la lingua di un sonetto composto da Palmario in dialetto napoletano. Dopo questa introduzione, seguono infine le rime, accompagnate da segnalazioni a piè di poesia sulle note marginali e interlineari del manoscritto, le cancellature, omissioni, aggiunte, segnalazioni e lezioni originarie adesso corrette dalla curatrice. Un glossario, una tavola metrica, e gli indici dei nomi e dei capoversi chiudono il volume.

Il tutto – introduzione, testo, note, e indici – si attiene ai più alti e rigorosi criteri di trascrizione e di edizione critica. La curatrice deve essere complimentata per la precisione del suo lavoro editoriale e della sua analisi linguistica. Inoltre deve essere ringraziata per aver portato alla luce l'opera poetica di un autore marco-emiliano la cui lirica, sia politico-civile che sentimentale, sa muoversi anche con una certa indipendenza dalla tradizione poetica del Trecento toscano alla quale essa attinge. Il volume merita pienamente il suo posto in qualsiasi collezione di rimatori italiani.

KONRAD EISENBICHLER

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Gloria Allaire. *Andrea da Barberino and the Language of Chivalry*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997. Pp. xiv, 185.

Tutti coloro che sono interessati alla produzione cosiddetta minore della letteratura cavalleresca italiana, e ai quali non è certo ignota la 'sfortuna' critica di Andrea da Barberino – la quale si contrappone in maniera tanto più sorprendente all'incredibile popolarità delle sue opere, una popolarità che si estende ben addentro nel nostro secolo e che è paragonabile solo a quella di alcuni dei più celebrati 'grandi' della nostra tradizione – non possono non rallegrarsi per la pubblicazione di questo lavoro, giustamente segnalato dall'autrice come "the first comprehensive examination of the life and works of the Florentine *prosatore*" (3).

La studiosa si sofferma innanzi tutto sulla vita del Nostro, sulla sua attività di autore e *cantatore*, sulle sue opere che spesso i moderni conoscono con titoli parzialmente o totalmente diversi da quelli riportati dai manoscritti, sulla sua cultura e sulle sue letture, sul cospicuo numero di indicazioni geografiche presenti nei suoi romanzi, che derivano sì spesso da fonti libresche, ma riflettono anche "the lively contemporary interest in travel for commercial or religious purposes" (9), sul suo successo presso i contemporanei (documentato dal numero di manoscritti, di incunaboli e di cinquecen-

tine che ci rimangono, e dalle riprese, dalle riduzioni e dalle rielaborazioni dei suoi testi), non solo in Italia, ma anche in Francia e in Spagna, e presso i posteri. Anche se, nonostante le sue lunghe ed accurate ricerche in archivi e biblioteche, non sembra che l'Allaire abbia potuto aggiungere granché, a quanto già era noto sul Nostro, questa prima parte presenta una lucida introduzione complessiva alla figura di Andrea, nella quale il lettore trova esposte in maniera chiara e lineare tutte le informazioni in proposito reperibili in diversi lavori apparsi dalla fine del secolo scorso in poi.

Viene quindi esaminato lo stile narrativo di Andrea: partendo spesso da affermazioni di critici precedenti (affermazioni a volte più enunciate che confermate dall'analisi dei testi), l'Allaire prende in considerazione il carattere 'storico' dei romanzi del Nostro, che sembra puntare spesso più al tono della cronaca che a quello dei cantari e del romanzo cavalleresco, con la sua accuratezza nell'elencare le località degli itinerari dei suoi personaggi, le caratteristiche dei vari popoli con cui essi vengono occasionalmente a contatto, le loro lotte con animali feroci che non sono più soltanto "lions and serpents or dragons" (20), ma anche altri le cui descrizioni risalgono ai bestiari medievali, e i loro precisi, se pur fantastici, alberi genealogici. L'Allaire mette altresì in risalto la varietà di registri del suo linguaggio, "shaped according to the particular narrative needs of a passage" (21), la verisimiglianza psicologica del suo modo di raccontare, i suoi riferimenti al mondo classico e l'impiego di formule del latino liturgico, la sua consapevole utilizzazione dell'arte della retorica, la sua sensibilità nel trattare storie d'amore, la sua abilità nella strutturazione dei vari capitoli e dei vari libri dei suoi romanzi, il suo uso della subordinazione e del polisindeto; tutti aspetti che, se pur si ritrovano a volte in maniera sparsa in altri testi della tradizione cavalleresca coeva o precedente, distinguono ed innalzano il piano d'arte su cui si muove Andrea da quello più semplice e meno impegnato di tanti anonimi autori di romanzi e di cantari manoscritti e a stampa che di quella tradizione ci sono rimasti.

Il nucleo più cospicuo del volume e il campo in cui maggiormente si esercitano l'attenzione e l'acume critico della studiosa riguarda l'analisi di altri tre testi che si possono verisimilmente attribuire ad Andrea, e di uno che, al contrario, è da alcuni considerato opera sua, ma probabilmente si deve alla penna di un suo imitatore. Si tratta, rispettivamente, della *Prima Spagna*, romanzo che si leggeva in un codice della Biblioteca Albani, subito dopo un *Aspramonte* che è certamente quello di Andrea e prima di una *Seconda Spagna* (di questo codice, andato successivamente smarrito, erano state ricopiate e pubblicate nell'Ottocento le rubriche dei primi due testi); di questa stessa *Seconda Spagna*, nota anche come *Ansuigi* (e da non confondersi con l'omonimo romanzo pubblicato nel 1871 da Antonio Ceruti su un manoscritto della Biblioteca Ambrosiana nella "Scelta di curiosità letterarie inedite o rare dal secolo XII al XIX"), che probabilmente corrispondeva al testo conservato anche in un manoscritto della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze; e delle *Storie di Rinaldo da Monte Albano*, variamente conservato in cinque manoscritti tutti a Firenze, quattro alla Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana e uno alla Riccardiana. Per queste tre opere l'Allaire conduce un esame filologico accurato e meticoloso (basato, nel caso della *Prima Spagna*, naturalmente soltanto sulle rubriche) del linguaggio, del tipo di immagini impiegate, dello stile, delle strutture narrative che le accomunano ai romanzi sicuramente di Andrea, per concludere che ci sono motivi assai validi per considerarle sue; mentre nel caso del *Libro di Rambaldo da Risa*, conservato in un unico manoscritto sempre alla Nazionale di Firenze, le "similarities to Andrea's narrative content, language, and

syntax" (122) sarebbero il risultato di semplici parafrasi di brani dell'*Aspramonte* o prestiti dal *Guerrin Meschino* e dall'*Ugone d'Alvernia* che un suo imitatore avrebbe messo insieme senza possedere l'abilità dello scrittore, ed anzi fraintendendo spesso i testi originali. Non avendo la possibilità di consultare i manoscritti in questione, è impossibile per chi scrive formulare un giudizio personale sui testi sotto discussione; è il caso tuttavia di osservare che le analisi dell'Allaire si rivelano senza dubbio puntuali e convincenti, al punto da giustificare pienamente le sue conclusioni. Ma al di là del risultato immediato che si ricava da queste pagine, quello di ampliare e di ridurre il numero dei titoli delle opere di Andrea, che a prima vista potrebbe apparire prematuro e forse anche ozioso, ove si rifletta che ancora così poco si sa di quelle certamente sue (e il romanzo rimasto, con i *Reali di Francia*, il più diffuso a livello popolare, il *Guerrin Meschino*, non gode ancora di un'edizione moderna non diremo critica, ma neppure vagamente attendibile!), importa rilevare quanto il quadro e la conoscenza dello stile, della configurazione linguistica, dell'organizzazione strutturale dei romanzi del Nostro ne risulti ampliato ed approfondito, e quanto più precisi e più definiti in conseguenza la sua caratterizzazione e il posto da lui occupato nella tradizione narrativa della letteratura cavalleresca italiana. Quei romanzi ci presentano uno scrittore ben consapevole delle esigenze e della preparazione del pubblico popolare a cui si rivolge, e affatto meritevole del successo di cui presso quel pubblico le sue storie hanno goduto per secoli.

Dalle indagini e dagli approfondimenti dell'Allaire risalta la figura di un autore che stabilisce accuratamente e conosce perfettamente i termini della sua scrittura codificandoli in sintonia con quelli del suo lettore e/o ascoltatore ideale, e che, secondo un'immagine suggestiva usata nella conclusione, ci appare come "a missing link between the early Italian reworkings of chansons de geste and the Renaissance epic masterpieces" (124). Resta da augurarsi che il presente studio (arricchito alla fine di due "Appendici" in cui si elencano i manoscritti delle opere di Andrea, spesso sinora ignorati, e si offre l'esame comparato dei capitoli del *Libro di Rambaldo* con altri testi del Nostro; di una notevole "Selected Bibliography" [151-70]; di indice dei lessemi e di indice di nomi e argomenti) segni davvero un punto di partenza "to increase modern awareness of Andrea's contribution to the chivalric literary tradition" e stimoli in un prossimo futuro "more thoughtful and comprehensive critical treatments of this author and his works" (124).

ANTONIO FRANCESCHETTI

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Ronnie H. Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce, Renaissance Man of Letters*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997. Pp. 310.

A book on an author so diverse and prolific as Ludovico Dolce was long overdue. Terpening's study is especially welcome because it succeeds in sketching a clear and convincing portrait of this Venetian author who was not only a poet and indefatigable translator of ancient texts, but also a disseminator of literary culture. Like many of his contemporaries, he was a true man of letters, writing love and chivalric poetry, com-



edies, tragedies, historical journals, treatises on lapidary sciences, on social issues (women, ill-fated husbands, marriage, etc.), and he was engaged in a host of other literary and editorial endeavours. Before proceeding to a close analysis of Dolce's more significant literary exploits, Terpening provides a biographical sketch of the cultural backdrop of sixteenth-century Venice where the author lived and worked. The many extant letters to and from other writers, artists, editors, and noblemen attest both to his popularity and to his wide range of interests. Also, his brush with the Holy Inquisitors, who interrogated him regarding certain books he helped to publish, reminds the reader of the repressive climate of the times. It especially reveals how closely the Church of the Counter-Reformation monitored the spread of printed material.

By and large, Dolce's literary activities were not suspect to the Church, as he was mostly interested in the diffusion of literary culture and traditions. This propensity is particularly evident in his translation of Horace's *Ars poetica* into Italian. At a time when the educated were schooled in Latin and could, therefore, easily read Horace in the original, the importance of this translation can only be seen as Dolce's express desire to make literary works accessible even to those outside the world of academia. Such a commitment was undoubtedly the driving force behind all the translations and "rifacimenti" or vulgarizations of works which, he believed, contemporary readers would find amusing and useful. Terpening illustrates this determination to propagate literature by relating an anecdote wherein a studious Dolce was asked what he was doing hiding among dead writers. Dolce replied that those authors were very much alive, if readers could only access them. It was, thus, his aim to revive important books by making them intelligible to a modern and wider reading audience. For this purpose, he would go so far as to substitute old examples with more recent ones, risking anachronism and charges of unfaithfulness to the original text.

This tendency to re-work old texts points to his conviction that literature should delight and teach, and, above all, should be more responsive to the needs and expectations of the reading public rather than to stifling academic standards. Dolce was a keen literary critic *avant la lettre*, as literary criticism had not yet developed into the genre we know today. He was among the early defenders of Ariosto and one of the first to appreciate the harmony and unity of the *Furioso*, anticipating by centuries Croce's well known assessment of the poem. His appreciation of chivalric poetry was no mere fancy, for he also wrote four chivalric poems. Terpening discusses the most original, albeit youthful, *Sacripante*, which continues the action of the *Furioso*, and the more mature *Prime imprese del conte Orlando*, which takes the action back to the times that precede Boiardo's *Innamorato*. Refraining from a tempting comparison with the great models of the past in which Dolce's poems would undoubtedly fade, Terpening praises Dolce's poetic versatility and calls attention to the post-Tridentine morality informing both works.

The portrait of Dolce as a man of letters comes more into focus as Terpening discusses the poet's fascination with the theater. Following an overview of the critical reception of the comedies, praised mostly for their reflection of the times, he places Dolce "among the truly versatile men of letters in the sixteenth century" (91). This is hardly an exaggeration, for he was also the most prolific tragedian of the Cinquecento, having translated all of Seneca's plays and adapted numerous classical tragedies. Though much is owed to him for all this work, most critical attention has centered on

his two original dramas *Didone* and, especially, *Marianna*. Focusing his discussion on the latter, which deals with Herod's jealous suspicions of his wife Marianna and her execution, Terpening goes on to formulate a "World-View of Cinquecento Tragedy." He identifies the tragic conflict in the role of the tyrant's captain or counselor, who is torn between his loyalty to his lord and to the "human rights" of the lord's victims. The argument draws strength from other canonical Renaissance tragedies in which the captain vainly advises the ruler against the use of excessive violence. His failure to prevail over the tyrant's disposition to undermine the stability of order signifies mankind's insufficiency to influence the course of events. As it pertains to *Marianna*, this view of tragedy is quite sound; however, in its ambition to include other tragedies it falls short of its mark, for, as may be seen in tragedies such as Trissino's *Sofonisba*, Aretino's *Orazia*, and Groto's *Adriana*, the conflict does not always lie in the captain's dilemma of divided loyalties or conflicting emotions.

Terpening appropriately entitles the last chapter "non mai stanco di giovare" (never too tired to be helpful). I say appropriate because from the *Giornale delle historie del mondo*, a sort of historical notebook or 'zibaldone', to the *Trattato delle gemme*, a translation of Leonardi's *Speculum lapidum*, one comes to appreciate the full extent of Dolce's commitment to popularizing knowledge, and to luring more readers to the well of literary culture. Terpening is right on the mark when he concludes that, without Dolce's indefatigable efforts, "the history and development of Italian literature would surely be the poorer" (169).

With this balanced, well articulated, meticulously researched, and very informative study, Terpening has rendered a great service to students of the Renaissance. Readers will appreciate the wealth of information offered in the numerous and detailed endnotes, which take up almost a third of the entire book. The extensive bibliography will undoubtedly be of immense value to scholars wishing to study in detail cultural or literary aspects that were either peripheral to the book's premise or simply too vast to receive adequate treatment here. Aficionados and readers with casual interest in the Italian Renaissance will read this book with delight and profit.

SAL DIMARIA

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Laura Benedetti. *La sconfitta di Diana. Un percorso per la "Gerusalemme liberata"*. Ravenna: Longo, 1996. Pp. 148.

The starting point for Laura Benedetti's study of the *Gerusalemme liberata* is the obvious fact that there exists in Tasso's epic masterpiece a fundamental "discrepanza tra la presenza femminile pagana [represented by Clorinda, Armida and Erminia] [...] e quella cristiana [represented by Sofronia and Gildippe]" (7). This discrepancy suggests the presence of an "interferenza" between the "discorso assunto ufficialmente" and an "intenzione che, rifiutata a livello cosciente, riemerge con effetti perturbatori" (31). For the author, this hidden intention reflects a desire on Tasso's part to suppress non-traditional ideals of femininity symbolized by the pagan goddess Diana, ideals which the pagan heroines Clorinda, Armida and Erminia embody. For Tasso and the

Renaissance generally, these ideals exist only in a pre- or extra-social condition, in "un ipotetico *vacuum sociale*" (18), and must therefore be made to succumb to prevailing social norms.

Yet this attempt to "defeat Diana" also has significant implications for the principal male hero of the poem, Goffredo. Making use of Freud's notion of the "atto mancato" as well as Chiappelli's thesis of the *vis abdiu* contained within the "recitato" or surface events of the poem, Benedetti argues that the *Liberata*'s resolution contains a fundamental contradiction: the victory of Goffredo not only involves the subordination of the pagan heroines to a Christian civil and indeed urban ideal, but it also implies a process of self-mutilation in which the hero is unable to establish a positive relationship with a nature that he perceives as a "potenza malefica da dominare" (31).

Having announced in her opening chapter "L'esempio di Diana" the central theme of her study, Benedetti then goes on in the next three chapters to consider the "careers" of Tasso's pagan heroines. Clorinda's battle with Tancredi, for example, "è un nodo cruciale, in quanto concretizza in un vero duello il conflitto sotteso al poema," that which Georges Güntert calls "la sottintesa lotta tra i sessi" (48). This "lotta" achieves its most interesting treatment in Benedetti's chapter on Armida. Arguing that Goffredo has no specific pagan counterpart among the principal male figures (Aladino, Solimano and Emireno [60]), the author claims that "il vero corrispettivo di Goffredo è Armida" (60-61). Developing A. Bartlett Giamatti's thesis that for Tasso "city is always superior to nature, duty to love, redemption to rest," Benedetti sees a fundamental conflict between Armida's garden and Goffredo's discipline: "L'esercito di Goffredo è per l'individuo luogo di educazione e repressione, mentre il giardino di Armida offre soddisfazione immediata al desiderio e all'istinto. Goffredo vuole costruire la città; Armida difende i diritti della natura" (61). Erminia, meanwhile, is seen as Tasso's most problematic female figure: "Erminia, più di ogni altra creazione della *Liberata*, sembra essere sfuggita di mano al suo creatore" (93). In love with the Christian hero Tancredi, Erminia dresses in the armor of Clorinda, Tasso's *virgo militans*, in the hope of reaching the Christian camp and the object of her love. For Erminia, a figure embodying the traditional feminine virtues, this act involves the appropriation of the attributes of a "donna libera" (85), of a different, non-traditional feminine ideal. It is, according to Benedetti, this potentially transgressive ideal that tempts Erminia (85-6). If, moreover, the other heroines function first to distract the Christian heroes (Tancredi and Rinaldo) from their mission and then to act as the instruments of their reintegration into the Christian army, Erminia, "sempre e suo malgrado soggetto, e non oggetto, d'amore" (93), has no such function; she thus remains fundamentally extraneous to the epic theme of the poem, a symbol of its inherent contradictions.

In chapter five, "L'amore cristiano," the author discusses the Christian heroines Sofronia and Gildippe. These figures are unlike their pagan counterparts insofar as they do not participate in that "conflitto sessuale che costituisce la struttura portante del poema" (97). Rather, the stories of Sofronia and Olindo, Gildippe and Odoardo, represent the "stadio ideale cui tendono le storie d'amore tra Rinaldo e Armida, Clorinda e Tancredi" (97). The ideal of matrimony represented by the careers of Sofronia and Gildippe thus becomes the only ideal of erotic love possible within the world of Tasso's poem. Even the strong-minded and heroic Sofronia must undergo "un processo di educazione che elimini ogni sospetto di utilizzazione strumentale della

fede ai fini di una liberazione individuale" (107). Sofronia's marriage to Olindo is thus Tasso's way of exorcising the last vestiges of that transgressive Diana-like virginity symbolizing feminine independence.

Benedetti's concluding chapter, "La sconfitta di Diana," returns with full and effective force to the central thesis of the book: the conflict between Armida and Goffredo, between nature (in the form of Armida's garden) and the city. If the *Liberata* ends with the total victory of the Christian army over the disparate pagan forces, then it does so at the expense of the Christian hero's total humanity. The "uomo nuovo" that emerges from this "processo di educazione" is "un individuo mutilato" who has set himself in violent opposition to nature. Thus while it is an excellent treatment of the problematic position of the female characters within the *Liberata*, *La sconfitta di Diana* also provides the reader with a deeper understanding of the role and function of Goffredo as the unifying symbol of the Christian forces.

MARIO D'ALESSANDRO

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Elio Providenti. *Luigi Pirandello. Lettere della formazione, 1891-1898*. Roma: Bulzoni, 1996.

Il terzo e attesissimo volume sulle lettere familiari giovanili di Pirandello non è certamente venuto meno alle aspettative. La specifica, certissima precisione che contraddistingue le ricerche di Elio Providenti trova riconferma in questo concreto quanto illuminante spaccato della vita dell'agrigentino.

Innanzitutto nulla viene tralasciato nella laboriosissima, perseverante ricerca e identificazione di ogni minima informazione o personaggio emergenti dalle lettere, a loro volta soggetti di scrupolosa ricognizione, sicché a lettura conclusa nulla rimane di lacunoso o fantomatico. Tanta messe di materiale non poteva tuttavia venire così bene articolata se non fosse stata sostenuta da una genuina passione e quasi si direbbe da un obbligo morale considerato che il Providenti è anche discendente di Pirandello. Le lettere ai familiari coprono il periodo 1891-1898. Manca l'epistolario per il 1896 dovuto al fatto, secondo il Providenti, che la permanenza in Sicilia di Pirandello si protrasse in quell'anno più a lungo del previsto. Appaiono tuttavia in appendice settantaquattro lettere sparse che vanno dal 1899 al 1919. Trapela in questo epistolario tutta l'anima travagliata di Pirandello, debolezze, entusiasmi, impuntature, ostinazioni, affetti profondi, desolazione. Pirandello riversa il suo animo con estremo, genuino candore, combattuto fra lo sconfinato, struggente bisogno di libertà e i bisogni talvolta soffocanti della vita quotidiana. Più che mai traspare nel sottofondo la costante tristezza della vita: "sto passabilmente bene [...] ma il vero guasto è dentro [...] lo sento nell'anima". E ancora "Non ho più alcuna volontà; mi piace anzi abbandonarmi a quella degli altri [...]". Fate di me quel che volete". Oppure "cercherò un'occupazione qualsiasi, ma fuori, fuori d'Italia, fuori di questo paese, in cui debbo vergognarmi di dire quello che sono e che dentro mi sento".

Il dissidio si fa più che mai drammatico nella lettera al padre e alla cugina Lina in merito alla decisione di rompere il fidanzamento. "Mio adorato padre [...] chi oserà,



chi oserà strapparmi dal petto quest'amore, questo bisogno dell'Arte [...]. La felicità d'una persona non si può acquistare con l'infelicità di un'altra [...]. La disgrazia di Lina può ben anche risiedere nell'essersi ella incontrata in un uomo che appartiene a una ristretta categoria di disgraziati [...]. Io non debbo, io non posso sposare". E a Lina "Credimi, Lina mia, io non ti darei mai un dolore, se non fosse per risparmiartene uno ben più grande in avvenire".

I problemi non cesseranno con il fidanzamento e il matrimonio con Antonietta: "una ragazza piena di meriti, con centomila lire di dote", e ancor più per i persistenti contrasti con il suocero Calogero Portolano prima e dopo le nozze – evidentemente entrambi attaccatissimi al denaro. "Questo maledetto denaro sarà sempre il chiodo della mia vita [...]. Per le gloriose vie di questa Patria me ne andrò all'altro mondo sopraccarico d'onori; ma senza un soldo in tasca".

Quando il suocero vuole rimandare di due o tre mesi il matrimonio fissato per il giugno 92, Pirandello va su tutte le furie: "e ora patatra! il matrimonio si celebra a settembre o a ottobre! A che gioco si gioca? Questo matrimonio chi lo fa? per chi mi ha preso? con chi crede d'avere a che fare? il giretto a sua figlia glielo faccio fare io, non c'è bisogno che glielo faccia fare lui [...] in ottobre, se vuole, la pigli lui; io la piglio in giugno o non la piglio più. Bello, chiaro e tondo! E non mi faccia altre storie e mi lasci in pace, perché ho molto da fare [...]. Mieì cari, vi prego di non parlarmi più di questo matrimonio".

Nello stesso tempo Pirandello è assillante nel chiedere denaro da cui ovviamente continua ad essere ossessionato. "Non ho più quasi biancheria; dovevo farmela prendendo moglie: non ho preso moglie, e son rimasto quasi nudo". Nel novembre 93 le cose sembrano rimediate: "Mieì carissimi, la cosa pare che vada – dato l'umore della bestia non si sa mai quel che possa accadere [...]. Le condizioni del matrimonio pajono ormai stabilite: residenza a Roma, da soli; assegno annuo lire novemila; al più presto possibile le nozze".

I rapporti con il suocero, tuttavia, non migliorano né prima né dopo il matrimonio. Alla futura sposa scrive: "Che cosa dovevo scrivere a Calogero? Non va tutto bene? [...] Scriverei a te soltanto [...]. Voleva Calogero anche per lui una lettera d'amore? Non ne ho scritte mai ad un uomo, anche volendogli del bene". Al padre dopo le nozze arriverà addirittura a parlare di "basse, odiose manovre di Calogero Portolano. Questo schifoso tipo di volgarissimo assassino avvelena il latte che Antonietta dà a mio figlio [...] uomo nefasto [...]. Bada, per dio, Calogero! vorrei dirgli. Tu forse ancora non mi conosci a fondo; ignori forse a quali estremi la mia natura tenuta a freno dalla riflessione, ma per se stessa violenta, potrebbe ridurmi. Bada!".

Nel gennaio 97 rincara la dose di attacchi: "È l'ultima parola pacata che gli rivolgo dopo la quale [...] gli risponderò quattro e quattr'otto che non stia più a rompermi [...], che la misura è già colma, e che se seguita di questo passo non arriverà ad altro fine, che a quello di costringermi a riportargli in casa la figlia – *illico et immediate*".

Ma anche i rapporti con l'adorato padre che non sembrerebbe approvare incondizionatamente l'operato del figlio si faranno per qualche tempo tesi. Lo indica il tono amaro-ironico alla sorella: "Mia cara Lina [...] ho avuto il premio che mi toccava per la cieca fiducia e la devozione filiale verso mio padre; e, dopo il premio, naturalmente, l'accusa di figlio ingrato e snaturato [...]. L'odio fra me e il Portolano è a tal punto che, senza dubbi, al primo vederci ci salteremmo reciprocamente addosso come due belve [...]. Quello che io non posso e non potrò mai perdonare a Colui di cui

porto il nome non è tanto il danno materiale irreparabile, quanto l'orribile tortura morale che mi ha inflitta per tanti anni, ostinandosi odiosamente a non voler riconoscere come un debito sacro il denaro della dote *carpia*. Carpita, sì, e nessuno meglio di me può saperlo [...]. L'odio per il Portolano lo accecò fino al punto di fargli perdere ogni pietà per il figlio. E ora piange? Tardi piange, e le sue lagrime non possono spietarmi il cuore mai più". Solo più tardi i rapporti con il padre rientreranno nella normalità.

A contrasto troviamo un Pirandello quanto mai fiducioso, ora trasognato, ora appassionato e quasi delirante, o nell'imminenza delle nozze: "Antonietta mia [...] immaginavo la vita come un immenso labirinto, circondato tutt'intorno da un mistero impenetrabile [...] il male è nella vita, un male privo di senso – mi dicevo. Ora il sole è per me nato! Ora il mio sole sei tu, e tu sei la mia pace e il mio scopo", o più ancora per la nascita del figlio "la mia esultanza, il mio delirio di gioja non ha limiti [...]. Io temo veramente d'impazzire".

Purtroppo la pazzia della moglie ricoverata in una casa di salute porrà presto fine a questi momenti di grazia. L'epistolario testimonia essenzialmente una visione tragica della vita. Di particolare rilievo l'episodio del tentato suicidio della figlia Lietta vittima anch'essa della gelosia della madre. La lettera più commovente rimane senza dubbio quella indirizzata alla madre nell'imminenza della sua fine, lettera che sarà poi seppellita insieme a lei. "Mamma mia santa [...] io non so staccare un solo momento il mio pensiero da Te e ti vedo come se ti fossi davanti e mi struggo di non poterti baciare codeste sante mani, che tante cure e tante carezze mi diedero quando forse d'un tuo conforto e d'una tua carezza non sentivo il disperato bisogno che sento adesso! Tu, Mamma, che hai più animo di tutti noi, tu che tanta virtù hai saputo trarre dalla tua vita fortunosa, piena di gravi momenti, nei quali il tuo cuore s'è profondato in abissi di sacrificio e la tua mente s'è levata a considerazioni supreme di là dal male e dal bene di questa meschinissima esistenza terrena, Tu, Mamma, per tutti noi, comanda ancora al tuo corpo stanco e tormentato di resistere".

A premessa di questo epistolario quanto mai avvincente e illuminante dell'uomo Pirandello, Elio Providenti affronta e discute il problema dell'estetica pirandelliana. Partendo dal saggio del 1893 *Arte e coscienza d'oggi* e inserendo Pirandello nelle polemiche letterarie del tempo, il Providenti identifica il lento evolversi dell'arte pirandelliana fino alla definizione dell'umorismo. Anche se il saggio non fa esplicito riferimento all'epistolario vero e proprio ne diventa un eccellente complemento in quanto coevo alle lettere di questo periodo. Non c'è dubbio che questa ennesima, preziosa documentazione del Providenti costituisca una delle fonti basilari e più importanti della bibliografia pirandelliana.

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Jeffrey T. Schnapp. *Staging Fascism. 18 BL and the Theater of Masses for Masses*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996. Pp. xviii, 234.

As part of the new trend of historical studies on fascism's cultural and entertainment policy, *Staging Fascism. 18 BL and the Theater of Masses for Masses* brings to light

the colossal and forgotten spectacle *18 BL*, which had been staged outside Florence as part of the 1934 *Littoriali della cultura e dell'arte* of the GUF (Gruppi Universitari Fascisti). Jeffrey Schnapp sees *18 BL* as a fascist myth-making experiment and a converging-diverging centre of modernist culture, opposing and emulating the bolshevik mass theater. Bolshevism and fascism, Schnapp says, considered culture in general, and theater in particular, as a "laboratory in which the new mass subject could be shaped and new forms of mass organization tested" (2).

The purpose of a fascist mass theater was, then, political, or better, an indoctrination of the masses, as Hal Foster points out in his brief but lucid foreword to *Staging Fascism*: "it was to bind a disparate people into a linguistic group that was also a political mass, one national-ideological body" (xiii). The fascist process of indoctrinating the Italian people began first by means of "adunate oceaniche" in the large cities; then itinerant cinema and theater, which (mounted on a fleet of tracks as the Thespian theater, for example) bought propaganda spectacles to small villages and mountain towns.

The idea of a fascist theater of masses for the masses was launched by Mussolini, who, speaking to the SIAE (Società Italiana Autori ed Editori) on 28 April 1933, appealed to playwrights to do away with the "famigerato 'triangolo' [of the bourgeois theater] che ci ha ossessionati finora" and to bring to the stage the sentiment of the modern Italian nation "che è quello della rivoluzione fascista." Further, a theater appealing to the nation should be, Mussolini remarked, "un teatro di massa" capable of housing "quindici o ventimila persone."

Spurred on by these words and organized by the hierarch Alessandro Pavolini, a collective of young playwrights (Luigi Bonelli, Sandro De Feo, Gherardo Gherardi, Nicola Lisi, Raffaello Melani, Corrado Sofia and Giorgio Venturini) decided to create a revolutionary fascist theater of "essential words and actions," bringing to the stage fascism's ideals of man and life. The collective wrote a three-act spectacular play titled *18 BL*. It was modelled on the paradigm that fascism had imposed on recent Italian history: the Great War, the fascist revolution, and the emergence of "metallized man." Called to direct this spectacle was a young but already successful film director, Alessandro Blasetti.

Emulating the bolshevik mass theater, *18 BL* was as grandiose as the authors' youthful imagination and fascist pompous rhetoric could conceive. The stage-site alone was a "sculptured" stretch of land as large as seven baseball fields. On this huge stage over two thousand people performed, in the midst of 50 trucks, an infantry brigade and a cavalry brigade, four machine-gun battery units, and an airplane squadron. Flood lighting, loud-speakers, music, and all the paraphernalia of modern technology were employed to create sound and visual effects.

The protagonist was *18 BL*, the first assembly-line truck produced by FIAT, named Madre Cimberna (Mother Cartridge-Pouch). She played the role of a caring nurse during the war and of a supportive mother during the *spedizioni punitive* of the *squadristi*. Madre Cimberna died at the end of the second act after a long, active, and heroic life. In the third act the "metallized man" appeared on horse-back and Mussolini's voice was heard on the loud-speakers, equating the one with the other.

Schnapp speaks at length of the social and philosophical connotation of *18 BL*'s Madre Cimberna. For example, being an instrument of work and a means of transportation for proletarians, the truck *18 BL* symbolized the entrance of working people into

the mainstream of national life, obviously implying an anti-bourgeois stand. The name Madre Cimberna given to the character of a caring nurse points to the sacrifice of the common soldier in the trenches as well as the dynamism of national determination.

Philosophically, *18 BL* symbolized the emerging "metallized man" as an "alternative to bolshevism's 'mechanical' mass subject" (7). Schnapp makes a distinction "between Soviet *mechanization* and fascist *metallization*." Unlike bolshevism, which had a solid Marxist-Leninist philosophical basis, fascism compensated for its "unstable ideological core" by stimulating an "aesthetic overproduction – a surfeit of fascist signs, images, slogans, books, and buildings. Symbols – symbols like the fasces, open to an infinity of modernist, classical, or Romantic restylings, capable of sustaining a multiplicity of genealogical links between the new regime and the Roman imperial state, the *faisceau* of the French revolution, and the *fasci risorgimentali* – were a privileged site of self-definition for fascism" (6).

The use of machines in the bolshevik theater was a means to demystify the artificiality of the bourgeois stage and life and ultimately it was an instrument for emancipating mankind from the slavery of work. On the other hand, fascists gave militaristic anthropomorphic attributes to the 18 BL Madre Cimberna to show an heroic way of life: "it would be inconceivable that Mother Cartridge-Pouch's motor simply be replaced or rebuilt, because it is quite literally her own distinctive mechanical soul or heart" (89-90). Madre Cimberna, symbolizing the first generation of fascists, would heroically go through the hardship of toil, sacrifices, physical decadence, and death. Then the "metallized man," Mussolini, takes her place in the third act.

The metallized man's "ancestor – says Schnapp – is the dandy: [...] a creature who is all masks and impenetrable surfaces [...]" (103). Marinetti's sketch of Mussolini depicts such surfaces well: "Quando s'alza per parlare tende in avanti la testa dominatrice, proiettile quadrato, scatola piena di buon esplosivo, cubica volontà di Stato. Ma l'abbassa, per concludere, pronto a colpire nel petto o meglio sventrare la questione con la forza di un toro. Eloquenza futurista bene masticata da denti d'acciaio, plasticamente scolpita dalla sua mano intelligente, che sbricciola la plastilina inutile degli argomenti avversari" (221-22). He, the metallized Mussolini, would mould the metallized nation, on the road to a new civilization, fascist civilization.

The *18 BL* spectacle was presented on 29 April 1934, and it was a colossal flop. The twenty thousand spectators could not relate to a truck as protagonist; and on the huge stage, coupled with many technical shortcomings, the story-line was lost in a meaningless chaos of noise, explosions, and military manoeuvring. Not even one of the authorial collective, Corrado Sofia, could "make heads or tails out of it" (197). Most reviews were negative and only very few lukewarm. Even supporters of a new theater, such as Giulio Bragaglia and Massimo Bontempelli, did not approve of the *18 BL* production.

Fiercely against the production were Telesio Interlandi and Corrado Sofia. Sofia claimed that Blasetti did not listen to his and De Feo's suggestions. Blasetti candidly admitted that "the spectacle that was supposed to be performed on April 29 [...] did not coincide with the spectacle that [...] was actually performed" (135). The fascist idea of mass theater was, then, dead at birth, forgotten and erased from pre-war and post-war historical memory.

In analyzing *18 BL* as a play, the author notes quite accurately that it was not the epic work it appeared to be, with its nationalist motif and gigantic staging of man and



material; rather, it was a tragedy because the death of Madre Cimberna at the end of the second act left the continuation of the fascist revolution open and uncertain. Inspired by fascist ideology, *18 BL* could only have expressed a tragic vision of existence. Fascism conceived life as an endless war where individual energy had to be channelled for the common good, which was equated with the well being of the nation. Thus for fascism individual lives were not marked by a series of immanent tragic as well as joyous events, but by an endless war, a metaphysical tragedy with neither end nor solution. From this nihilist view of existence ensued the fascists' cult of war and war heroes like Madre Cimberna and their contempt for the comfort of life and peace, as one of the fascist songs goes: "ce ne fregammo un dì della galera, / ce ne fregammo della brutta morte, / per preparare questa gente forte / che se ne frega adesso di morir" (A. Virgilio Savona e Michele L. Straniero. *Canti dell'Italia fascista (1919-1945)*. Milano: Garzanti, 1979. 108-9).

In closing the book (in which a substantial selection of photographs and drawings reinforces visually the arguments treated), the reader is left with the dubious impression that a theater of masses for the masses failed in Italy because of the flop of *18 BL*. However, this was not the only reason, nor even the main reason for the failure. Rather, from 1926 on, fascism had become increasingly a regime paradoxically enveloped in populist rhetoric, but entrenched in a semi-feudal socio-cultural structure. Radical fascists, who did not conform, were sent to isolated and distant places; such was the fate of Italo Balbo who was dispatched to Libya, as governor of that northern African colony, far away from the centre of power.

The lack of a serious evaluation of these historical facts is unfortunately a shortcoming of this otherwise fine and enlightening study – a study that, centring on the development and failure of *18 BL*, explores synchronically and diachronically the evolution of modernist theater in Italy and beyond, between the two world wars.

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Thomas E. Peterson. *The Ethical Muse of Franco Fortini*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1997. Pp. 200.

Following his excellent critical presentation of Franco Fortini in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (volume 128. *Twentieth-Century Italian Poets. Second Series*. Detroit: Brucoli Clark Layman, 1993. 142-49), with the present publication Thomas Peterson establishes himself as an authority on this important modern poet who died in 1994. Peterson's contribution functions on at least three levels: on one, his study contributes to the growing appreciation of the poetry of a figure better known in his own country for his political, journalistic and literary essays; on another level, it accomplishes the primary objective of the author, which is "to advance the appreciation and understanding of Fortini among the English-speaking public" (1); and finally, the text provides extensive English translations of unrivalled clarity and precision of a difficult and often impenetrable poetic diction. Peterson himself, in his *Introduction*, provides a statement of his methodology which consists of a chronological approach

within which several other techniques are accommodated – from close readings of key compositions to analyses of the influences and the relationships between Fortini and his contemporaries.

In that same *Introduction*, which is based on the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* entry cited above, the author also identifies several of the primary stylistic features on which he intends to elaborate in the eight chapters of *The Ethical Muse*. These are: Fortini's allegiance to classical Italian verse from a formal standpoint, his rejection of the concept of poetry's autonomy with respect to the social context, his insistence on a political content expressed in terms of "general" or transhistorical issues as opposed to period-specific issues and his tendency to fuse the spiritual, the political and the aesthetic in his discourse. The challenge which Peterson sets for himself from the outset is that of demonstrating how Fortini's poetry can be political or realistic without collapsing into or aligning itself with neorealism and how it can be given over to aesthetic considerations without closing itself off in a hermetic solipsism. Furthermore, the author must come to grips with the heterogeneous and often contradictory nature of Fortini's verse which is the product of an eclectic intellect whose interest ranges over the works of thinkers such as Lukacs, Kierkegaard, and Barthes as well as Dante, Manzoni, and Leopardi.

In chapter one Peterson analyses *Foglio di via* (1946), Fortini's first volume of poems, finding in the work traces of hermetic and vocian influences giving way to Fortini's own "poetics of advent" about which the author states: "poetry must be a figuration of the ethical and historical world, not in a naively realist sense but as a supposition of a *telos*, a better future" (15). In formulating such defining poetics, Peterson positions Franco Fortini's aesthetics, articulated in prose writings as well as in *Foglio di via*, in relation to Montale's "hermetic antifascism" (25) on one side and an ideologically charged neorealism on the other. As far as Peterson is concerned, Fortini, though admiring Montale, "sensed in him a retreat [...] into a sanctuary of sorts, an avoidance of the fundamental social and political conflicts of the times" (12). But, rather than extol a realist or historical discourse, *engagé* in the usual terms, Fortini is seen to isolate Cesare Pavese from the neorealist context in which he is often placed, preferring to privilege his "realism of conscience" (19). What Fortini takes from Pavese, according to Peterson, is the "synthesis of his mythical and ethical concerns" (19). A third figure looms prominently in the formative phase of Fortini's lyricism and the construction of the thematic axes of *Foglio di via*, and that is Giacomo Noventa. Writes Peterson: "His [Noventa's] moral presence is felt in much of Fortini's writing, particularly in his concepts of 'errore' and 'ospite' (25). These are two notions which play a determining role in the content of this and subsequent volumes of poems.

The second chapter of *The Ethical Muse* is devoted to a study of *I destini generali* (1956) in which the author attempts to expand and apply the notion of a specific historical moment transformed or represented in terms of "archetypal situations" (37) – hence the significance of the title. Rather than elucidate or "capture" the present, or evoke a recent past by means of literary artifice, Fortini strives to achieve a forward-looking or "prophetic" stance and, in doing so, endows his verse with "a third element [the others being lyricism and realism] – of incompleteness and uncertainty" (35), which connects back to the "poetry of advent" mentioned above.

In order to clarify and show the derivation of such ideas, presumably realized in *I destini generali*, Peterson explores the essays which reveal Fortini's views on the theories of Lukacs, Bataille, and Foucault on the correlation between "aesthetic formalism" and "political responsibility" (50). The only problem with this approach is that, perhaps, Peterson loses sight of his original intention of examining Fortini's poetry which, as he asserts, "needs to be considered on its own terms" (1). After making the point that Fortini's poetry has been obscured by his prose, the author appears to lapse, for the moment at least, into a similar tendency by conducting a critique of the political and aesthetic essayist. It is arguable whether or not the prose theories are actualized in the poetry: it depends on which theory of textual analysis one adopts.

There is once again a change of methodology in the next chapter (the author had predicted this in his *Introduction*) in that Peterson conducts a comparative study of two "canzoni," one by Fortini (from *I destini generali*) and one by Ungaretti (from *La terra promessa*). The point of the comparison (or at least a point) is that both compositions take a mythical situation as the basis for the construction of a spiritual autobiography – with the essential difference being that, "Fortini [unlike Ungaretti] addresses a specific history in a city from which he himself was a voluntary exile" (63). As he very convincingly and lucidly demonstrates by means of a close reading of the two "canzoni," "time, memory, and historical consciousness – move in Fortini from the particular to the general, and imply certain cognitive and ethical statements about society, about the true and the good" (63). In outlining the dissimilarities between the two works, Peterson reiterates observations made in his *Introduction*, where he identifies Fortini's position with respect to the hermetics and provides additional interpretive depth to the comments made on *I destini generali* in the preceding chapter.

Next, the author translates *La poesia delle rose* (1962), a difficult poem 18 octaves long, and isolates in it the themes of paradox and redemption. In preparation for his dual task, he examines the significance of the noun "rosa" in Fortini's poetry. His finding is that the term stands for myth and hope – a fusion of Pavesian and Biblical allusion. Peterson's contention is that in the poem, "the flower occurs amidst an array of means to 'abolish history' until it is reconstituted as a symbol of spring and hope, of reason and redemption" (74). The paradox to which Peterson refers appears to be Fortini's desire to "try to conserve the residual revolutionary capacities of language within a *new alienation*" (73). Such a stance sets him apart from the neo-avantgarde who saw conventional or even classical language as the instrument of capitalist society and, therefore, repudiated it. As well as being political in this sense, the poem has, for Peterson, "a redemptive or heuristic character" (82); this makes it, in many respects, reminiscent of the *Divine Comedy* – which accounts for the redemptive dimension of the poem's meaning. In arguing along these lines, however, Peterson comes very close to erasing the revolutionary component which Fortini desires and appears to suggest that the poem has the same political applicability as does the work of Dante.

Peterson himself, in his introductory remarks to *The Ethical Muse*, informs the reader of the content and scope of the fifth chapter stating that it "is a formalistic study of the poetry of Fortini and others in the 1960s and 1970s, considered in terms of a 'metrics' based on the Goethian concept of phyllotaxis" (2). Such a characterization has a double implication in that phyllotaxis is a metaphor for "a poetry based increas-

ingly on isomorphism, pattern and a specific interest in trees" (93). This means that Peterson intends to examine the poetry of Fortini thematically, commenting on its arboreal imagery, and metrically, illustrating the concept of phyllotaxis defined as the disposition of syntactical elements in such a way as to reveal or even construct an "organization of space and time" (93). The approach causes the author to consider the works of several contemporaries in this light, especially the poetry of Andrea Zanzotto.

The poems of *Poesia e errore* (1959 and 1969), *Una volta per sempre* (1963), and *Questo muro* (1973) are the subject of the next chapter entitled "*Dazein or Dazibao*" – references to the Heideggerian Being-in-the-world, in the first instance, and to the Chinese public mural, in the second. With this title, Peterson intends to signify the universality of Fortini's poetics, as well as its revolutionary and anti-hegemonic ideological message. In addition, he ties the content and form of these three volumes of poems to the already established poetics of delineating a "general destiny" of the oppressed of the world through iconic images of specific instances of violence and oppression. Poetry's political function actualizes itself in the poet's determination to inscribe on the symbolic wall those very occasions of brutality and irrationality. Rather than trace parallels with the metaphysical walls of Montale, Peterson correctly sees a more appropriate correspondence with intertexts in Sereni. Consequently, the author once more reaffirms his original contention that Fortini is drawn to the more militant poets than to the symbolist hermetics.

Fortini's insistence on "poetic form as the necessary vehicle for his political and spiritual vocation" (134) is Peterson's working hypothesis in the section of *The Ethical Muse* devoted to *Paesaggio con serpente* (1984). Here, the critic speaks of Fortini's "dual citizenship" and "dialectic in two moments," by which is meant that the poet situates himself simultaneously within and outside of historical events. The serpent of the title appears in the collection's opening poem and collapses into its emblematic polyvalence, the Garden of Eden and the Valley of Armageddon: the poles between which both Fortini's poetics and Peterson's critique oscillate. In this volume, Fortini's quest for an epistemological poetry and an expressionistic language takes him toward the paintings of Morlotti, McGarrell, and Poussin, whose *Landscape with Snake* (1648-1651) Fortini's title replicates.

The final chapter of the text is entitled, "The Death of Bacchus" and, in effect, addresses the fundamental problem inherent in all of Fortini's poetry, which is the paradoxical relationship of tradition and revolution. By means of a complex network of intertextual connections that incorporate Nietzsche, Manzoni and Leopardi, Peterson visualizes in the work of Franco Fortini (here is meant once more not only the lyric) the re-enactment of the Bacchic-Dionysian cycle of death and rebirth which fuses mythological and Christian representational modes. This imagery in turn becomes the expressive vehicle for Fortini's political and ethical vision. Death is seen in literal terms as the destruction of civilization and nature and in moral terms as the absence of justice in history. Rebirth, in both classical and Christian terms, assumes the form of the "hope" and "advent" discussed in earlier sections of the volume.

Peterson ends his fine study with a conclusion that recapitulates some of the lines of inquiry followed throughout the text, while focusing on Fortini's last publication, *Composita solvantur* (1994). In the final analysis, Peterson demonstrates the uniqueness of a poet whose "moralism is inseparable from his formalism" (174). It appears



that Fortini's aesthetic rigour separates him from the experimentalist of the twentieth century, while his political views set him apart from the hermetics and post-hermetics. *The Ethical Muse of Franco Fortini* is an indispensable road map through that complicated, sometimes enigmatic, highly allegorical and often obliquely ideological literary world of an underappreciated (to date) modern poet.

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Luisa Polesini Karumanchiri and Jana Vizmuller-Zocco. *L'uso delle preposizioni in italiano*. Seconda edizione. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996. Pp. xi, 272.

In her article "Alcuni tipi di esercizi sull'uso delle preposizioni," Karumanchiri reports that "una delle più grandi difficoltà per gli studenti dei corsi di lingua anche avanzati è quello dell'uso delle preposizioni" (*Studies in Italian Applied Linguistics*. Eds. N. Villa and M. Danesi. Ottawa: CSIS, 1984. 75). Instructors of various levels of Italian as a Second Language thus welcomed the first edition of *L'uso delle preposizioni in italiano* since it was the only workbook in existence to focus on preposition usage and practice. ISL instructors will be pleasantly surprised with the second edition's more comprehensive format which includes not only a series of completely reworked and expanded exercises, but also a grammatical guide and software (a diskette containing almost all of the exercises found in the text). These helpful additions notwithstanding, the aim of the workbook is still "to help students to understand and practice using the most common grammatical structures which require the use of prepositions in modern Italian" (ix). The second edition continues to be best employed with intermediate to advanced students; however, the authors include and even identify some basic exercises which would be suitable for students at the beginner level. Moreover, the authors recommend that "the contents of the entire workbook be spread over three to four semesters" (ix). By observing these temporal guidelines while making concurrent use of another course text (perhaps a comprehensive Italian grammar), the workbook will prove to be a valuable resource to both the student and the instructor.

Since the exercises address and identify one topic at a time, they are easily cross-referenced to the guide. In her review of the first edition, Anne Urbancic noted that "The exercises seem very crowded, and the numerous typefaces, in addition to handwritten examples, are confusing and give the appearance of being cluttered" (*Canadian Modern Language Review* 45: 4, 1989, p. 741). The second edition has since resolved these aesthetic shortcomings and contains some black and white photographs and illustrations which enhance the exercises and overall presentation of the text.

The fact that the guide and the diskette facilitate independent study is a definite merit of this package. The guide presents grammatical explanations in English and makes effective use of various pedagogical graphics such as charts and tables. The authors clearly state that the guide is by no means an exhaustive grammar of preposition usage/meaning, rather it "illustrates only those topics which are dealt with in the

exercises" (x). The exercises correspond essentially to five main topic headings in the guide: I. Prepositions; II. Verb Phrase and Noun Phrase; III. Complements: Prepositional Noun Phrases governed by Verbs, Nouns, and Adjectives; IV. Complements: Independent Prepositional Noun Phrases; V. Contrastive Structures. The lists of expressions contained within the guide can, as the authors assert, aid not only students in their recognition and memorization of expressions, but also provide instructors with a helping hand in the creation of supplementary exercises. The guide presents a large pool of grammatical information into which students should wade slowly in order to avoid struggling with the strong and overwhelming "waves" of topics.

Another interesting addition to the second edition of *L'uso delle preposizioni in italiano* is the software. The diskette, prepared with the C.A.L.I.S. authoring system, requires only 5MB free disk space for installation on the PC. Installation into Windows is very easy thanks to the extremely clear instructions which accompany the diskette. The authors also include detailed directions on how to manipulate the program as well as a chart of the function keys for the various screens.

The engaging nature of the cloze type exercises seems to prevent them from becoming ordinary "drill and kill" language exercises in their technology-enhanced format. Rather, the exercises have greater efficacy in their electronic form insofar as they are accompanied by detailed, immediate feedback, vocabulary screens and various grammatical paradigm screens.

Despite some glitches with the Spellcheck feature, acknowledged also by the authors, hopping from screen to screen is quite easy. The screen display and text are limited to a few basic colours, and the audio component is non-existent. Peripheral devices such as the mouse are not required to complete the exercises. Although there are no graphics except for content boxes, the software nevertheless provides students with an excellent program to check and correct their answers in a language lab or to practice prepositional structures at home. This technological simplicity is irrelevant because the program still provides effective support for the aims of the authors.

The second edition of the *L'uso delle preposizioni in italiano* is a comprehensive package of materials which will serve as an excellent reference tool for students and instructors of Italian. The software is not only extremely useful, but it is definitely a sign that Italianists are collaborating with technology experts in order to enhance and improve their practices in and outside of the classroom.

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Amilcare A. Iannucci. *Dante: Contemporary Perspectives*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1997 (Major Italian Authors). Pp. xxii, 299.

Come precisa lo Iannucci nell'introduzione, i quattordici saggi compresi in questo volume mirano "to explore some of the major issues engaging Anglo-American Dante criticism today, namely, the relationship between Dante's 'minor works' and his '*poema sacro*,' the latter's unique textual characteristics, with particular emphasis on its intertextual and narrative strategies, and the *Commedia*'s reception, both oral and learned" (xx). Su questa linea Z. G. Barański, partendo dal riconoscimento che "the Middle Ages had a highly sophisticated understanding and interest in literary criticism and theory" (3), riconosce che anche con Dante "his considerable artistic originality is indivisible from the novelty of his critical meditation" (5); A. R. Ascoli riconsidera il tema della 'palinodia', centrale negli studi danteschi del Nord America, i quali vengono a loro volta rivisti alla luce di due tendenze critiche fondamentali nel campo letterario di tale continente, il "rhetorical" and "historical" reading" (23), e i modi in cui le 'opere minori' del poeta possano e debbano essere lette come tali; M. Picone esamina i rapporti fra Dante e la tradizione classica nel loro sviluppo storico, sulla base dei cambiamenti introdotti dal poeta nel canone degli *auctores* dalla *Vita nuova* attraverso il *De vulgari eloquentia* e il *Convivio* fino alla *Commedia*, allo scopo di penetrare "the new and different judgement which he passed on the classical world and the different function which from time to time he attributed to it" (55); C. Kleinhenz intende chiarire, nel suo modo di evocare "a particular word, verse, or passage in the Bible [...], the inventive process that was at work in Dante's mind when he was writing his masterpiece" e "the sort of assimilative process the poet expected on the part of his reader" (76); A. A. Iannucci rilegge l'episodio di Paolo e Francesca per dimostrare che anche Dante, come Omero nella descrizione del mito degli amori di Venere e Marte, "uses forbidden love as a device both to portray history and to reflect on its mad course" (95); T. Barolini quello di Ulisse, visto come "the lightning rod Dante places in his poem to attract and defuse his own consciousness of the presumption involved in anointing oneself God's scribe" (116); R. Lansing riesamina gli ultimi sei canti del *Purgatorio* e la situazione del Paradiso terrestre, considerato "the climax of the poem and the turning point in the pilgrim's moral consciousness" (131); L. Pertile intende mostrare "the extent to which a definition of contemplation as desire for God is relevant to our understanding of Dante's *Paradiso*" e come "the language and imagery of mystical literature may have affected his formal and ideological choices in the writing of his final *cantica*" (150); S. Botterill suggerisce che "the *Commedia*'s aspirations to authority are strengthened, rather than undermined, by the poem's (and thus its author's) very awareness that the successful achievement of its self-declared enterprise will, in the long run, turn out to be impossible" (168); J. M. Ferrante passa in rassegna il pensiero politico di Dante, come si manifesta e si sviluppa in molte delle sue opere, riguardo "the role of the empire and of the church [...], the relations between independent city-states or separate kingdoms and the empire, the destructive roles played by France and Florence, the divisive

factionalism of political parties [...], the corruption of the papacy and the papal curia, and the ideal of Rome" (181); C. Lund-Mead studia il problema dell'androginità nei Cistercensi e in Dante, concludendo che nella *Commedia*, attraverso le figure di Virgilio, Beatrice e San Bernardo, "gender integration and sexual fluidity characterize a journey of inclusiveness which leads to the God in whom sexual differentiation is posited as the only appropriate goal of the love of humankind" (209); J. Ahern si propone di considerare "the role orality played in the reception of the *Comedy*" (217) e attraverso l'esame di numerosi documenti giunge a stabilire che "for literates, poetic performance is the recitation of a fixed, readily consultable text", mentre "illiterates consider no single oral performance as normative", con la conseguenza che "literates often view oral performance as the butchering of a fixed text" (226); D. Parker si rivolge alla tradizione dei commenti della *Commedia*, affermando che il poema "over time has produced a rich field of analyses of the dynamics of reception or of cultural history more generally" e sostenendo l'opportunità che si crei "a dialectic between the recent work done on commentary and more interpretative undertakings [...] a kind of dialogue between historical and philological studies [...] and hermeneutics" (251); e W. Franke, a proposito della domanda: "how are the truth-claims made by the poem to be taken?" (259), suggerisce che "Dante felt the truth of his poem was fully historical, [...] as incredible as that perhaps seemed even to him, because he deigned the existential grounds of the sense and very intelligibility of history" (267). I saggi sono tutti accompagnati da note e da bibliografia, e il volume comprende notizie biografiche degli autori e indice dei nomi.

A.F.

Elio Monducci e Gino Badini. *Matteo Maria Boiardo: La Vita nei documenti del suo tempo*. Con la partecipazione di Giuseppe Trenti. Modena: Aedes Muratoriana, 1997. Pp. lxi, 499.

Come viene precisato nella presentazione firmata dal Badini, il volume raccoglie 744 "documenti d'archivio sulla vita di Matteo Maria Boiardo [...] dei quali 370 [...] inediti" (v); fra questi degni in particolar modo di nota sono i testi di tutte le lettere del poeta, che giungono ora a 204 (mentre 193 erano nell'edizione critica curata da P. V. Mengaldo, M. M. Boiardo. *Opere volgari: Amorum Libri, Pastorale, Lettere*. Bari: Laterza, 1962) e di tutti i suoi corrispondenti; si avverta inoltre che dei 374 documenti già noti "soltanto la metà, circa, rappresentata dal carteggio, era stata già pubblicata per intero, mentre dei rimanenti si conosceva l'esistenza soltanto attraverso edizioni quasi sempre parziali, o in regesto, o per semplici accenni" (vi). La presentazione del Badini si sofferma quindi sui momenti più salienti della vita dello Scandianese; in appendice si trovano una cronologia della vita e delle opere del poeta, e due tavole, dei luoghi dove si conservano le sue lettere, e dei primi editori delle stesse. Segue un'introduzione, firmata dal Trenti, sull'origine e sulla natura dei documenti stessi, che riguardano "quasi esclusivamente [...] affari amministrativi – pubblici per lo più, di governo – del Boiardo, mentre non resta praticamente campo ai documenti di carattere privato,



familiare" (xxvi), con rare eccezioni, e sulla "realtà concreta in cui il Nostro operò e con cui ebbe a che fare, come funzionario ducale [...] e come feudatario" (xxvii); il Monducci e Elio Montecchi firmano quindi un saggio sulla prima edizione, perduta, dell'*Innamorato*, che opinano stampata a Scandiano "dal dicembre del 1482 al febbraio 1483" per opera di Pellegrino Pasquali (xlvi), lo stesso cui si deve la prima stampa completa, e similmente perduta, dell'incompiuto poema nel 1495; "il primo titolo proprio [...] fu [...] *Innamoramento d'Orlando*", anche se fin dalle origini il poema venne allo stesso tempo indicato come "*Orlando innamorato*" (xlvii). Si osservi che, nel ripetere la notizia riguardante l'invio di "tre copie" a Ercole I (lviii), si trascura la precisazione del Reichenbach, secondo il quale si sarebbe trattato di una sola copia del poema, diviso però in tre libri anziché in due come in precedenza si era verisimilmente anticipato, e come avverrà di regola nelle edizioni successive alla morte del Boiardo per la divisione dei primi 60 canti (cfr. Giulio Reichenbach. "La partizione originaria dell'*Orlando Innamorato*". *Giornale storico delle letterature italiane* 137 [1960]: 157-59). Alla fine del volume si trovano, opera del Trenti, indici delle persone e dei luoghi, dei destinatari delle lettere del Boiardo e delle sue opere; alberi genealogici dei Boiardo, dei da Correggio, dei Gonzaga di Novellara, e dei Sessi; e una "Bibliografia essenziale".

A.F.

Giorgio Padoan. *L'avventura della commedia rinascimentale*. Padova: Piccin Nuova Libreria / Casa Editrice Dr. Francesco Vallardi, 1996. Pp. 230.

Il volume, che offre un'ampia panoramica sulla situazione del teatro comico del sedicesimo secolo, è suddiviso in sette capitoli. Nel primo, sulla "lunga incubazione" nella seconda metà del Quattrocento che precede "il travolgente successo, per cui nei primi anni del Cinquecento rapidamente la commedia moderna esplose imponendosi all'Italia e poi all'Europa" (1), il Padoan si sofferma sulla "farsa" a Napoli, sulla "<<tragedia>> umanistica" che "propose soprattutto eventi storici contemporanei" (5), sugli studi, sulle recite e sulle traduzioni dei comici latini, nell'ambito dei quali Ferrara divenne il "perno della fortuna del teatro antico" con "la scuola di Guarino Guarini" (9); sulla *Cassaria* e sui *Suppositi* dell'Ariosto, "due punti fermi nella storia del teatro cinquecentesco, termini di confronto con i quali non si poté non fare i conti lungo tutta la prima metà del secolo" (20); nel secondo considera la situazione della Toscana, dalle sacre rappresentazioni cinquecentesche alle commedie di "intonazione chiaramente novellistica" (24), alla *Calandra* del Bibbiena, "la più tipica del secolo" (30), e alla *Mandragola* del Machiavelli, "apparentemente giocosa e boccacevole", ma "in realtà piena di succhi amari, che la fanno partecipare del senso del tragico" (38); nel terzo si rivolge innanzi tutto alla "tragedia d'imitazione greca" (41), quindi al *Negromante* dell'Ariosto, che si contraddistingue per "l'uso, anziché della prosa, del verso, qui proposto nell'endecasillabo sciolto sdrucchiolo" che "mirava a rendere il ritmo del senario giambico latino" (48), alla *Clizia* con cui il Machiavelli intendeva "trasformare il successo di pubblico, che la *Mandragola* continuava a raccogliere, in consacrazione letteraria" (49), agli *Studenti* e alla *Lena*, nelle quali l'Ariosto "veniva [...] meglio

sottolineando l'originalità delle sue commedie rispetto alle antiche, al cui modello continuava peraltro a mantenersi sostanzialmente fedele" (55), e ai testi dell'Aretino, *La cortigiana*, *Il Pedante*, *El Beco* e *Il Marescalco*, nei quali si avverte "la deliberata ed irridente deformazione dei moduli tradizionali" (57); nel quarto, sulla "commedia <<popolare>>" (69), analizza i testi derivati dalla tradizione bucolica e "il passaggio dai pastori letterati ai contadini, visti in chiave ironica e satirica alla luce della plurisecolare satira anti-villanesca" (70), soprattutto per opera di scrittori senesi, nei 'mariazzi' di Padova, nelle opere 'alla bulesca' di Venezia, e nelle farse della Congrega dei Rozzi sempre di Siena; nel quinto, sull'evoluzione "dalla commedia rusticale all'espressivismo plurilinguistico", indugia sul Ruzzante, il "più straordinario e rinnovatore autore ed attore cinquecentesco" (89), sulla "tradizione veneta [...] rivolta più a forme autoctone che all'imitazione classica, e con una forte inclinazione al realismo" (107), con particolare attenzione alla *Veniexiana*, sul Giancarli, sul Calmo e sul Negro; nel sesto esamina lo sviluppo della commedia nel corso del secolo, dagli anni Trenta e Quaranta in poi, quando "la letterarietà si sovrappone alla teatralità soffocandola, proprio in anni in cui la crisi politica prima e quella religiosa poi spingono il teatro italiano al distacco dalla viva realtà e da polemiche sociali" (127), i suoi rapporti con le Accademie, come quelle degli Intronati di Siena e degli Affumati di Bologna, l'intervento dell'elemento "romanzesco" (135), la *Talanta* e *Lo Ipocriso* dell'Aretino, che colaudano "un nuovo modello di scrittura comica, che si allarga a raggiera sfruttando le molteplici modalità della lingua" (139), la produzione di altri autori come quella del Dolce e del Parabosco a Venezia, e quella del Gelli, del D'Ambra, del Grazzini e del Cecchi a Firenze; nell'ultimo, su "l'emergere del melodrammatico e del patetico", traccia un profilo della commedia nella seconda metà del secolo, nella quale, in mezzo a una "produzione [...] quantitativamente assai alta", si osserva sì la presenza di "qualche opera di buona fattura", ma in generale "si tratta di commedie di medio, se non basso, livello artistico, dove è già gran fatto se si può parlare di buon artigianato" (159) – e le eccezioni più cospicue sono rappresentate dal *Candelaio* del Bruno e dai lavori del Della Porta e del Braca – fino all'"esplosione della favola pastorale" (184) con capolavori quali l'*Aminta* del Tasso e *Il Pastor fido* del Guarini. All'analisi della commedia si accompagna assai spesso anche l'attenzione rivolta alla situazione coeva della tragedia. Il volume è corredato di illustrazioni, di un'ampia "Bibliografia essenziale" (195-227) e di indice dei nomi.

A.F.

Francesco Guicciardini. *Écrits politiques: Discours de Logroño, Dialogue sur la façon de régir Florence*. Introduction, traduction, postface et notes par Jean-Louis Fournel et Jean-Claude Zancarini. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997 (Fondements de la politique). Pp. 357.

The volume includes the political writings of Guicciardini in French translation and complements the versions of *I ricordi* and *La storia d'Italia* that the same scholars published previously. The introduction (7-45) provides information on the context of

the works and commentary on their contents. It deals with the politico-military events of the time – for example, the invasion by Charles VIII in 1494 which, as Guicciardini recognized, had had a major impact on the politics of the peninsula – and the constitutional changes which governments underwent in the period. There is information on other writings by Guicciardini, a comparison with Machiavelli and a discussion of the relations between the two authors. The analysis of the texts themselves focusses on Guicciardini's political ideals and philosophical principles (his fundamental realism, for instance), the idea of liberty which permeates his works, and his views on the best form of government.

In the Note on the texts (46-47), Fournel and Zancarini explain the criteria they have adopted. They claim to have shown respect for author and reader by producing a translation that exhibits “la fidélité et la beauté” (46), that is, one which is faithful to the original – and carefully reflects the multiple meanings of terms like *reggimento*, for example – and yet is written in good readable French, even if the style does not always conform to modern practice.

The texts of the political treatises are accompanied by numerous explanatory notes that elucidate difficult terminology and fundamental themes, and provide cross-references to the author's other writings. The “Postface” (323-51) presents information on Guicciardini's life and works and on the cultural context, including the *questione della lingua*, and a treatment of Guicciardini's observations on political terminology. At the end of the volume the Index (353-57) lists both names and “notions” like *ambition* and *violence*.

O.Z.P.

Gennaro Barbarisi e Claudia Berra, eds. *Per Giovanni Della Casa: Ricerche e contributi*. Gargnano del Garda (3-5 ottobre 1996). Bologna: Cisalpino, 1997 (Università degli Studi di Milano, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Istituto di Filologia Moderna, Letteratura Italiana, Quaderni di Acme 27). Pp. 493.

Comprende gli Atti di un incontro di studi originato, come precisa il Barbarisi nella “Presentazione”, “dalla convinzione [...] che sia giunto il momento di avviare un lavoro più sistematico e una più circostanziata (e documentata) riflessione sulle opere e sulla figura di uno dei personaggi più rilevanti nella vita culturale del nostro ‘500” (7). Dei quindici studi presentati, tre si rivolgono alle *Rime*: L. Serianni ne esamina la lingua e lo stile, soprattutto in relazione al Petrarca e al Bembo, G. Tanturli il testo proemiale nell'ambito della tradizione istaurata dai *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, G. Dilemmi i rapporti con il canzoniere bembesco; due ai “Capitoli”: A. Corsaro ne studia la collocazione cronologica, la tradizione del testo e la posizione nell'ambito della poesia burlesca, A. Masini la lingua, i suoi aspetti comici e le sue differenze da quella delle *Rime*, come anche i suoi rapporti con quella del Berni e dei suoi seguaci; tre al *Galateo*: G. Barbarisi ne discute la situazione testuale e le differenze fra il suo ultimo manoscritto, con correzioni autografe dell'autore, e la stampa postuma, difendendo da varie critiche che le erano state mosse l'edizione curata da lui stesso (Venezia: Marsilio,

1991), C. Berra una nuova possibile interpretazione, secondo la quale l'opera sarebbe da vedersi "come esercizio di stile [...]: una sperimentazione formale germogliata da e su un progetto iniziale meno, o non, letterariamente orientato, dedicato a un contenuto forte e denso, seppure connotato in direzione divulgativa" (332), piuttosto che "come pratico e disincantato, serio e persino severo trattato di comportamento, nel filone della ricca tradizione di 'manuali' umanistico-rinascimentale" (271), S. Morgana le riprese "del pluristilismo e del plurilinguismo espressivo del Boccaccio" (340), identificando come "chiave di lettura del trattatello" l'intento di rovesciare le "posizioni bembiane" e di proporre "un modello di lingua e di stile antitetico a quello degli *Asolani* e delle *Prose*" (350), come conferma anche la "ricognizione delle varianti più significative" (352) fra il manoscritto e la *princeps*; due all'*An uxor sù ducenda*: C. Vecce traccia la storia di questo breve dialogo, nel quale lo scrittore "congiunge [...]" i due filoni, quello retorico e quello misogino, per un'opera che è ciceroniana nello stile e nell'impianto" (465), P. Pissavino vi riconosce "una prima e significativa tappa nella ricerca condotta da Della Casa nel corso di tutta la sua produzione circa le ragioni che devono reggere l'interazione sociale" (479); uno rispettivamente ai canoni latini, visti come "prosecuzione immediata, sotto altra veste linguistica, dell'esperienza, che ormai veniva esaurendosi, del lirico volgare" (216; G. Parenti), al *Frammento sulle lingue* e al "concetto di 'uso'" nell'opera del Casa "e in questo testo" (242; C. Scarpati), alle lettere al nipote Annibale Rucellai, pubblicate in appendice al saggio con l'aggiunta di cinque inedite, nelle quali si avverte un progressivo "venir meno dell'istanza pedagogica" e una concorrente riduzione della "letterarietà" in relazione al passare degli anni e alla crescita del giovane che si veniva emancipando (394; M. Mari), alla biografia del Bembo, "di grande interesse specie per capire quale concezione il Casa aveva della storia letteraria recente e, di riflesso, quali fossero il modello che si era scelto e il posto che egli stesso aspirava ad occupare in quel panorama" (419; S. Carrai), e alle "due principali orazioni", allo scopo di "suggerire con particolare riferimento alla prima [...] una più ampia contestualizzazione storica e letteraria" (437; S. Albonico). Il volume è corredato di illustrazioni, che presentano copertine di edizioni o pagine manoscritte delle opere dello scrittore, e di indice dei nomi.

A.F.

Vanni Bramanti e Maria Grazia Pensa, eds. *Scrivere le vite: Aspetti della biografia letteraria*. Milano: Guerini Studio, 1996. Pp. vii, 141.

Raccoglie otto studi, come avverte il Bramanti, "prodotti in occasione di un convegno sulla biografia letteraria svoltosi a Padova nell'aprile del 1992, organizzato all'Istituto di Filologia e Letteratura Italiana della locale Università degli Studi in collaborazione con l'Accademia Patavina di Scienze Lettere e Arti" (vii). C. Mariani analizza alcuni momenti della fortuna biografica del Foscolo nella prima metà dell'Ottocento, documento in particolare del "diffuso interesse di tutto l'ambiente veneziano attorno al figlio esule dell'antica Repubblica" (1); E. Pellegrini prende in esame le vite di Andrea Doria, di Francesco Ferrucci, di Sampiero d'Ornano e di Francesco Burlamacchi stese dal



Guerrazzi che, avendo “della natura umana e della storia una visione profondamente pessimistica” (18), indugia spesso su “scene” che portano “alle estreme conseguenze la atroce prossimità dell’umano e del bestiale” (33); W. Zampieri quelle del Leopardi e del Foscolo opera di Giuseppe Chiarini, che vi effonde il suo caratteristico “elemento morboso, decadente o tardo-romantico”, nel quale “confluiscono [...] il tono ora concitato e febbrile, la tendenza all’autobiografismo e soprattutto l’attrazione esplicita per il dolore [...] e l’avversione invece per i felici e per i fortunati” (43); F. Tomasi prende in considerazione il ventennio fra le due guerre mondiali, “un periodo della storia culturale italiana molto vivace e ricco di contraddizioni”, nel corso del quale “ci furono moltissime iniziative editoriali legate alle biografie ed in particolare alle collane biografiche” (45); A. Arslan, dopo aver premesso alcune caratteristiche specifiche del genere ‘biografia’, quali l’“empatia (più che simpatia) tra il biografato e il suo biografo”, il “legame stretto fra loro come di ideale affinità, o parentela d’animo” (71), mette in rilievo che invece Alberto Savinio nel suo “modo apocrifo di ‘scrivere le vite’ [...] tende a cogliere e a definire se stesso nell’altro, e meglio se l’altro diviene alla fine un puro pretesto” (74); P. Luxardo riconosce nei lavori biografici di Roberto Ridolfi “due ipotesi di lettura: una prima, diretta a verificare il tasso di plausibilità dei riscontri biografici e delle ricostruzioni storiche [...] e una seconda, volta ad individuare le strutture portanti dell’intero progetto architettonico, estrapolando non solo eventuali dichiarazioni di metodo dei testi stessi, ma se possibile interpretando le propensioni dell’autore alla luce di un più complessivo disegno in cui si evidenzino – in filigrana – l’influenza o la lusinga di una progressiva finalità meta-filologica” (83); V. Bramanti si sofferma sulla biografia letteraria novecentesca, concludendo che, “se una scelta fosse possibile, è certo che ogni scrittore preferirebbe che ad esser letti fossero i suoi libri e non la sua (o le sue) biografie; ciò non toglie, tuttavia, che la moderna biografia letteraria possa essere quanto mai utile a meglio comprendere l’opera del biografato, così come la stessa biografia, in quanto lavoro di scrittura, possa venire considerata anche come prodotto creativo” (122); e M. Guglielminetti considera un saggio giovanile di Bachtin, rilevandone “due tipi fondamentali di coscienza biografica della vita: 1) l’eroico-avventuroso (il Rinascimento, lo Sturm und Drang, il nietzschianesimo); 2) il socio-domestico (il sentimentalismo e, in parte, il realismo)” (129-30). Il volume è corredato di indice dei nomi.

A.F.

Anna Maria di Martino. *“Quel divino ingegno”*; Giulio Perticari. *Un intellettuale tra Impero e Restaurazione*. Napoli: Liguori, 1997 (Critica e letteratura 5). Pp. ix, 257.

Il volume, suddiviso in tre parti, è preceduto da una prefazione di Franco Fido, il quale sottolinea che il lavoro della studiosa “finalmente illumina in modo adeguato la carriera del letterato pesarese e ne precisa utilmente il significato” (2). Nei due capitoli della prima parte la Di Martino, ricorrendo a numerosi documenti manoscritti e lettere inedite, ripercorre l’itinerario biografico dello scrittore, dalla nascita il 15 agosto 1779

a Savignano, ai primi studi e alle prime testimonianze giovanili della sua attività letteraria, al suo impegno civico e di "promotore di cultura" (23), al matrimonio e ai rapporti con la moglie Costanza, figlia di Vincenzo Monti, alla morte prematura il 26 giugno 1822. Nei tre capitoli della seconda viene presa in considerazione la produzione del Porticari come poeta e come prosatore, legata soprattutto alle esperienze politiche dei non facili tempi in cui egli visse e operò, come riflettono i suoi contrastanti atteggiamenti nei confronti della Repubblica Cisalpina, di Napoleone, di Pio VII, dei fermenti innovatori e delle remore tradizionalistiche avvertibili nei suoi scritti, quale l'*Egloga Piscatoria*, il *Panegirico di Napoleone*, *Per lo Natale del Re di Roma*, *Il Prigioniero Apostolico* e il *Giornale Arcadico*. Nei tre capitoli della terza, sull'attività filologica del personaggio, la studiosa si sofferma innanzi tutto sulle principali teorie linguistiche del tempo, sul predominio del francese in Europa e sulla *Dissertazione sopra lo stato presente della lingua italiana* (1808) di Antonio Cesari; quindi sulla posizione del Perticari, "più classica e conservatrice" di quella del Monti (167), e che si traduce in "un'analisi dettagliata e capillare degli scrittori della nostra storia letteraria anche allo scopo di indicare tra questi gli scrittori da prendere a modello" (191); e infine sui giudizi espressi riguardo ai suoi scritti da autori contemporanei, soprattutto nell'ambito di "neologismi, forestierismi, uso e norma" nel campo della lingua (197), e sulla sua fortuna critica. Il volume comprende una vasta "Bibliografia" del e sul Perticari e sui suoi tempi (217-57).

A.F.

Giuseppe Ungaretti. *A Major Selection of the Poetry of G. U.* Trans. Diego Bastianutti. Toronto: Exile Editions, 1997. Pp. 471.

Comprende un'ampia antologia in originale e in traduzione inglese dell'opera poetica di Ungaretti, con testi ricavati da *L'Allegria*, *Sentimento del tempo*, *Il dolore*, *La terra promessa*, *Un grido e paesaggi*, *Il taccuino del vecchio*, *Apocalissi*, *Dialogo e Nuove*. Nella premessa Il Bastianutti illustra i criteri che l'hanno guidato nella traduzione ("the translator must mentally recreate whatever non-verbal reality the poet tried to transmute into his original verses", 13) e nella scelta dei testi (condizionata dal desiderio di presentare "a comprehensive view of what best illuminates Ungaretti" e di "bring to light the frequently translated as well as the persistently untranslated Ungaretti", 14). Segue l'antologia una postfazione di Giusy C. Oddo, "Ungaretti: The Man and the Poet" (447-66), nella quale la studiosa, dopo aver delineato il panorama della scena letteraria italiana all'inizio del Novecento, si sofferma sulla preparazione intellettuale del poeta in cui "the poetic expression became [...] a measure of the mystery, the very essence of reality" (448) e ne traccia il profilo e la storia dell'attività artistica dalla formazione ad Alessandria d'Egitto e a Parigi fino agli ultimi anni in cui "Ungaretti was trying to forget his loneliness in constant travels" (465), soffermandosi sulla corrente dell'Ermetismo di cui egli fu riconosciuto fondatore, sul carattere "markedly autobiographical" della sua opera poetica (451), sulla sua esperienza come soldato nella prima guerra mondiale, sull'importanza del tema della memoria nelle sue poesie, sulla "metaphysical

tension [...] evident in the Ungarettian inspiration" (459), sulla sua esperienza in Brasile e sui significati allegorici "of the life of the poet and of human existence in general" espressi nell'incompiuta *Terra promessa*. Il volume è corredato di numerose immagini fotografiche del poeta, di una nota bibliografica sui suoi scritti e di una bibliografia scelta.

A.F.

Margherita Marchione. *Yours Is a Precious Witness: Memoirs of Jews and Catholics in Wartime Italy*. New York/Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1997. Pp. 259.

Come sottolinea David Jurist nella prefazione, la studiosa si propone di riesaminare "words and actions" (1) di Pio XII nel corso della seconda guerra mondiale soprattutto in rapporto alla situazione degli Ebrei; e come lei stessa precisa nel "Prologue", il volume, dotato di numerose riproduzioni fotografiche, "is a record of memories [...] that pays homage to both survivors and rescuers in Italy" (6). Nella prima parte sono presentati gli antefatti della storia italiana: l'unità e il ruolo che vi ebbero gli Ebrei, l'atteggiamento antisemitico dei Nazisti e dei Fascisti, il comportamento protettivo nel corso delle persecuzioni sia dei soldati italiani, sia di molti privati e di istituzioni religiose che in seguito ricevettero riconoscimenti ufficiali dalle Comunità ebraiche e dallo Stato di Israele, l'inizio della campagna antisemitica e le tappe fondamentali dell'Olocausto, e le reazioni di molti italiani, di Pio XI e di Pio XII, il cui comportamento non fu, come hanno cercato di dimostrare alcuni storici, disinteressato e indifferente a quanto stava succedendo intorno a lui in tutta Europa. Nella seconda parte vengono considerati documenti ed illustrati numerosi episodi che confermano l'intervento diretto di Pio XII, a favore degli Ebrei, variamente assistiti o nascosti in case di privati e in conventi o in altri edifici religiosi per sfuggire alle ricerche dei Nazisti e degli Italiani antisemiti in diverse città della penisola, quali Roma, Milano, Ferrara, Assisi, Genova, Firenze e Venezia; l'attività svolta in questo senso da vari ordini religiosi, come le Maestre Pie Filippini, i Padri Redentoristi, i Fatebenefratelli, i Salesiani e le Suore di Nostra Signora di Sion; e la politica abbracciata dal Vaticano in quelle circostanze, per l'esplicito intervento, documentato in numerose situazioni, del Pontefice, preoccupato da un lato di salvare il maggior numero possibile di Ebrei e di rifugiati politici, e dall'altro di non attirare direttamente le reazioni e le rappresaglie delle autorità tedesche e di Hitler mediante i suoi interventi, esponendo a rischi ancor più gravi proprio coloro la cui incolumità era al centro delle sue cure. Nella conclusione e nell'epilogo di questa seconda parte la studiosa ribatte ancora, dimostrandone l'infondatezza, le accuse mosse successivamente a Pio XII per il suo silenzio ufficiale e per la sua presunta segreta connivenza con le persecuzioni ordinate dal Governo del Terzo Reich. Nella terza parte sono raccolte le testimonianze di alcuni attori delle tragiche vicende esposte nelle parti precedenti, dei massacri compiuti dalle truppe tedesche di occupazione in Toscana, e viene esposta la situazione più recente dei rapporti fra Cattolici ed Ebrei. Alle note fanno seguito un glossario, una bibliografia e alcune appendici che elencano i rifugiati per

motivi razziali, politici o di altra natura (handicappati, omosessuali etc.) e le varie istituzioni religiose romane che li assistettero, documenti ufficiali riguardanti l'aiuto dato da Italiani a prigionieri alleati, le statistiche dell'Olocausto e l'indice dei nomi.

A.F.

Rinaldina Russell, ed. *The Feminist Encyclopedia of Italian Literature*. Westport, CT/London: Greenwood Press, 1997. Pp. x, 402.

Il lavoro, che si rivolge, come precisa la Russell nell'introduzione, a "the feminist scholar, the literary historian, and the general reader", vuol essere "a companion volume for all those who wish to investigate Italian literary culture and writings, penned by women and men, in a feminist perspective" (vii). Le voci, accompagnate da una succinta bibliografia, coprono tutto l'arco della letteratura italiana dal Medioevo al mondo contemporaneo, e sono state stese nella maggioranza dei casi da studiose; si rivolgono a scrittrici e scrittori "who either have already attracted the interest of feminist scholarship or are proposed here for the first time as interesting subject of study"; molti degli scrittori che appaiono nel volume sono stati inclusi in quanto "influential in shaping images of women and gender relations in western society" (come Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio); altri, meno noti, perché hanno "special relevance in a woman's writing perspective"; le scrittrici incluse "either have identified themselves as feminists or have been absorbed, to various degrees of awareness, by relations between the sexes and by the problems connected with them" (ix). Altre voci (elencate in appendice come "Entries by Period and Subject", e suddivise in "Schools, Movements, Problems", "Genres and Forms", "Middle Ages", "Renaissance and Early Modern", "Enlightenment", "Nineteenth Century", "Twentieth Century", "Feminism", "Figures and Types", "Personal and Political" e "Publishing") riguardano periodi storici, movimenti culturali e letterari, scuole di pensiero, tendenze critiche, critica femminista della letteratura italiana in vari paesi del mondo, temi, idee e questioni di particolare rilievo nella vita e nell'immaginazione della donna, modelli sociali e stereotipi femminili, problemi legali e medici, forme dello spiritualismo e pubblicazioni miscellanee di donne, associazioni e ruoli della donna nel mondo del cinema. Il volume comprende una "Selected Bibliography" e un indice di nomi, titoli e argomenti.

A.F.



















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